THE RURAL-URBAN DIALECTIC IN PRE-MONARCHIC ISRAEL : ISRAEL VIS-A-VIS THE CANAANITES AND THE PHILISTINES, ca. 1200 to 1020 B.C.E.

BY

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ABSTRACT

Using a historical materialist model of the rural-urban dialectic, this study is an analysis of the rural-urban articulation in Palestine c. 1200-1020 B.C.E., with particular reference to the aetiology of the conflict between the Israelite tribes and the Canaanites and Philistines.

The model of the rural-urban dialectic which is developed in this thesis, posits that the relations between rural societies and urban societies in the ancient Near East were essentially antagonistic. Urban centers were sites of consumption rather than production. They were parasitic upon their rural hinterlands, extracting the produce of the village peasantry by means of enforced tributary relations. This extortion of the surplus product generated the conflict between the inhabitants of the rural areas and the city-dwellers. The resistance to such oppression by the peasantry engendered the class struggle in the ancient Near East, which took the form of conflict between the tribute exacting class, located in the cities, and the agrarian peasant class, located in the villages.

The major thesis of this study is that the relations between the Israelite tribes and the Canaanites and Philistines can best be explained in terms of the rural-urban dialectic , which means that the conflict between the Israelite tribes and their urban neighbours was a manifestation of the antagonistic relations between rural and urban societies in the ancient Near East. The Canaanite and the Philistine societies were urban societies which existed as such by virtue of their ability to maintain tribute extracting relations with the peasantry of

their rural hinterlands. The Israelites, a tribal peasant society, were subject to this form of oppression to the extent to which they came under the orbit of Canaanite or Philistine power.

The aetiology of the sustained conflict which pre-monarchic Israel experienced with the Canaanites and the Philistines, lay in the relations of production imposed on them - relations which belong to the economic base of society - rather than in the realm of the superstructure, which includes the religious, political and ethnic aspects of a society. This conflict was expressed in religious, political and even ethnic terms, but had its source in the economic relations that existed between rural and urban societies in the ancient Near East.

IT IS THE WILL TO UNDERSTAND RATHER THAN SIMPLY TO KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT IS THE MOTIVATION FOR THE INQUIRY TO BE UNDERTAKEN HERE.

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PREFACE

One of the major crises in the contemporary church, certainly in southern Africa, if not worldwide, is the question of the role of the church in social conflict. So often the church is shown to have made little, if any, coherent sociological analysis of the society of which it is part, which often leaves it unconsciously on the side of an oppressor class [1]. The church's function in society is primarily determined by both its social location and its analysis of the society. In order to apprehend these two features (the contemporary 'texts' which the church has to read) correctly, the church requires a coherent means of social analysis. To this end much is being done - witness the impact of Liberation Theology, Black Theology and Feminist Theology.

Nevertheless a further critical step needs to be taken. It is not sufficient for the church to analyse both the society and its own location in that society. The church must subject another determinative text to rigorous sociological analysis. This text is the Bible. If the church continues to read its scriptures with the methodologies developed by western scholars, who have a clear social location and concomitant class commitment, then the Bible will remain captive to those class interests. What is necessary is that both the biblical text and the history (material practice) which it represents, should be subjected to a thoroughgoing sociological analysis in order to illuminate the class conflicts which are to be found

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1. This is one of the key criticisms leveled by Latin American Liberation theology at the institutional church, a theme which is applied to the South African church by The Kairos Document.

in them. Only once the Bible is correctly understood as a site of struggle in and of itself, can its liberative dimension be appropriated.

This point is driven home by Norman Gottwald (1985b) and Itumeleng Mosala (1986) in their criticisms of the manner in which Liberation Theology and Black Theology have used the Bible. Of Liberation Theology Gottwald writes:

> ... while invoking biblical symbols of liberation, liberation theologians seldom push those biblical symbols all the way back to their sociohistoric foundations, so that we can grasp concretely the inner-biblical strands of oppression and liberation in all their stark multiplicity and contradictory interactions (Gottwald:1985b,9).

Mosala levels a similar criticism at Black Theology. He takes issue with Black Theology,

> ... for not taking its own criticism of white theology seriously enough. It will be shown that this is particularly the case with regard to use of the Bible. The first part of the paper will, therefore, extrapolate features of Black Theology which, it will be argued, represent an ideological captivity to the hermeneutical principles of a theology of oppression. It will further be maintained that it is precisely this slavery to the hermeneutics of white theology which is responsible for the inablility of Black Theology to become a theoretical weapon of struggle in the hands of the exploited masses themselves" (Mosala:1986,176).

The struggle for liberation, whether it be liberation of race, class or gender, requires that the biblical text be appropriated in a manner which is truly liberative. As Mosala and Gottwald point out, this means that the Bible needs to be read with new tools, and from a different social location from that from which the church has traditionally worked. This thesis is a contribution to just such an endeavour. In it I attempt to introduce a model of class conflict which will

enable us to reach clearer apprehension of the dynamics of oppression within ancient Israel, and how these dynamics are represented in the text. Broadly speaking, this thesis is a contribution to the development of a coherent sociological approach to the Bible.

As regards the matter of inclusive language I have not at any point altered the sexist language of the quoted texts. In the body of the thesis inclusive language is preferred.

The debt I owe to the many people who have influenced this thesis in various ways is considerable. To Dr Bill Domeris and Rev Itumeleng Mosala, who supervised this thesis at different periods, go my special thanks. Prof. Ron Davies of the Department of Geography and Mr Melvin Goldberg of the Department of Sociology helped me discover the world of historical materialism. A more general indebtedness is due to the Department of Religious Studies, in which I have learnt much over the past three years. No little part has been played by the vigorous interaction among its staff and graduate students; they have provided a most fertile environment for study. To my housemates goes my gratitude for their support when I was doing far too much as it was, without trying to write a thesis as well. Helen Moffett, for her support over the past three years, her companionship during the long hours of study, and her remarkable intervention in the final stages of this thesis, deserves special mention. Helen Laurenson kindly consented to edit the thesis, and Susan Hall's proof reading eliminated many errors. To both go my thanks, and the acknowledgement that any recalcitrant errors remaining are our shared responsibility. Dr Chuck Wanamaker provided invaluable

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I wish also to acknowledge the financial assistance provided by the Human Sciences Research Council. All opinions expressed or conclusions arrived at are those of the author, and not to be regarded as those of the Council.

Finally, a special word of thanks to my parents and to Susan. The debt I owe them is beyond expression.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In 1979 Norman K. Gottwald published The Tribes of Yahweh, a book which provoked a storm of controversy within biblical scholarship. Not only did Gottwald bring the thesis of the Peasant Revolt, first proposed by G.E. Mendenhall (1962), to the forefront of biblical studies, but he employed a self-conscious marxist framework. His research, of monumental proportions, is a sustained challenge to the two dominant theories of Israel's emergence in Palestine: the Conquest and Immigration models. Gottwald argues that Israel's origins lay in some form of social revolution in which oppressed classes coalesced to overthrow the oppressive domination of the Canaanite city-states. What is of greater and more enduring importance, is that in The Tribes of Yahweh, Gottwald decisively broke from the traditional idealist framework within which biblical studies has been working for the past century. He argues for the priority of the historical materialist paradigm, and embarks on a detailed analysis of Israelite practice in the period prior to the Saulide monarchy, using marxian categories and tools to do so. The many responses to Gottwald's book have tended to focus on these two elements of his work, with his marxist approach coming under especially heavy criticism [1].

This thesis is located within the broad approach pioneered by

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1. Witness Mendenhall's (1983) virulent attack on Gottwald's use of marxist theory, and Hauser (1978) and Halpern's (1983) critique of the social revolution model.

Gottwald. It makes a contribution to this new school of biblical studies on two levels: the theoretical and the analytical. On the theoretical level it introduces a historical materialist model of rural-urban relations, and seeks to refine the work that has gone before by arguing that the causal dynamics of conflict between rural societies and urban societies are helpfully explained in terms of this model. On the analytical level it is an analysis of the material practice of Israelite relations with the Canaanites and the Philistines.

Part I is the theoretical section of the thesis, devoted to outlining the methodological foundations which govern the work (Chapter 2), and to developing the model of the rural-urban dialectic (Chapter 3) which will be used as the primary analytical tool in Section II. In Chapter 2, the stress is on the articulation of a coherent marxist paradigm. Of importance is the introduction of Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony to the realm of biblical studies. The concern with theory is not confined to Section I, but is sustained throughout the thesis.

The notion of rural-urban conflict is certainly to be found in Gottwald's work (Gottwald:1979,461-463, where he prefers the designation tribal/statist). What I set out to do in Chapter 3 is to give this notion of rural-urban conflict a specific theoretical grounding and to develop it into an analytical model capable of explaining the aetiology and nature of class conflict in ancient Near Eastern societies.

Part II is the analytical section of the thesis, where the

stress is not on a detailed description of material life in Palestine c. 1200-1020 B.C.E., but rather on an analysis of the broad social relations between urban and rural societies. Here the concern will be to explain the aetiology of the conflict between the emergent Israelite tribes on the one hand, and the Canaanites and Philistines on the other, and what form the class struggle took in this conflict. Attention will first be given to the mode of production in Palestine and its relation to the rural-urban dialectic (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 examines the situation of Canaan prior to the emergence of the Israelites 1450-1350 B.C.E., and observes a classic rural-urban articulation of conflict in that period. Taking this analysis forward chronologically, the nascent Israelite tribal formation is examined as it emerges as the polemical obverse of Canaanite society. The tensions within this rural society are noted as it has to contend with both the domination of the urban Canaanites, and with the temptation to stratification within its own egalitarian formation (Chapter 7). With the demise of the Canaanite domination of Palestine, the Philistines emerge as the regional power, and the Israelite tribal confederation is now pitted against the five-city coalition of the Philistines. This situation is studied in Chapter 8.

Finally, Part III is devoted to a concluding chapter. Chapter 9 draws together the argument of the thesis. In it two conclusions are reached. Firstly, that the model of the articulation of rural-urban relations proposed in the thesis is a useful tool with which to investigate ancient Near Eastern societies. Secondly, that the conflict between the Israelites

and the Canaanites and Philistines in the period c. 1200-1020 B.C.E. emerges from the enforced tributary relations imposed upon the Israelites, by the urban Canaanites and Philistines. In order to exist, these urban societies needed to extort the surplus product from the rural producers in order to invest it both in the physical entity of the city, and in the maintenance of a non-producing class.

Finally, the potential for the use of the model of the rural-urban dialectic to explain the social dynamics of the period of the transition to the monarchy is noted.

It is necessary to note briefly what the thesis is not. It is not primarily a textual study concerned with a detailed exegesis of various biblical texts. Neither is it a source, tradition, form or structural criticism of the text. It is rather an attempt to explain the aetiology of the social conflict between the Israelites and the Canaanites and Philistines. The biblical text will be used in this endeavour, but its use will be qualified by two controls. The first is expressed in Gottwald's words of caution that, "... it becomes clear how immensely complex and frankly problematic are the operations involved in translating the traditions of Joshua and Judges into historical discourse" (Gottwald:1979,154). The second control is the materialist reading of the Bible, a matter which is dealt with at some length in 2.2.

There are many works which treat the phenomenon of Israelite urbanisation in one way or another, and which create a scholarly context in which this thesis needs to be located.

Frank Frick (1977) provides what I believe to be the only systematic treatment of the city in ancient Israel (Frick's basic methodology will be addressed in 3.2. below). Various treatments of individual cities exist, many of which are reports of archaeological excavations. Graeme Auld (1978) isolates and examines a city type, the city of refuge. City gates and streets (Evans:1962), housing (Beebe:1968), hydraulic works and defence systems are elements of the Israelite city which have received close scrutiny. The Israelite city has recently come under attention as the provenance of particular texts. D.C. Benjamin, for example, identifies various *complexes* of texts from Deuteronomy as having their origin in the city.

This thesis shares none of these particular concerns, although their findings are cognate to its task. Its concern is with analysis, aetiology and explanation, rather than with the type of descriptive activity which is represented by the literature cited above.

In this thesis I also attempt to shift the focus of scholarship, which has in the main been on the urban world of Israel, to the rural areas. The chief reason for this focus on urban life is that most of the artefacts of the ancient world accessible for examination are the product of specialised groups: bureaucrats, priests, merchants, militarists, archivists and builders, who existed almost exclusively in cities. The result is that our perception of life in Israel has been distorted by the urban lens through which we view it. The danger of this is that the view point of the ancient

urbanites of their world becomes our view point. As Marx and Engels assert, we are then only "...able to see in history the political actions of princes and States, ...and in particular in each historical epoch have had to share the illusions of that epoch" (Marx & Engels:1970,59-60). One of the implications of the model of the rural-urban dialectic is that both city and countryside need careful examination if we are in anyway to reconstruct or comprehend accurately the material practice of any given society.

The historical point of focus of this thesis is pre-monarchic Israel c. 1200-1020 B.C.E., a period which is singularly devoid of extant data (Halpern:1983,48). We have little direct evidence of the nature of the material life of the inhabitants of Palestine in this period. This, as Coote and Whitelam (1986,113) suggest, could lead to historical nihilism. Or it could lead to an ever more detailed analysis of the biblical text, and of archaeological evidence, in an attempt to glean further shards of "empirical" data for the partially reconstructed society. Neither of these need be the case as Coote and Whitelam argue, and as I shall seek to demonstrate in this thesis.

Given a consciously formulated research strategy or interpretative framework with which to govern a number of analytical tools, Coote and Whitelam (1986) assert that the material practice of Israel is not beyond reconstruction. They argue that the emergence of Israel,

> ... is a surface event that is only understandable in terms of the wider, slower movement of much longer duration... Surface events, primarily those events

> which are most often the focus of traditional political histories, are played out around more permanent elements such as urban sites, trade routes, harbours, and climate (Coote & Whitelam:1986,115).

In this they argue for the priority of metahistorical enquiry over minute literary studies and archaeological investigations. Thus the long term regular and recurrent patterns which work themselves out over centuries are crucial to explaining the dynamics of a particular society. I will argue that the model of the rural-urban dialectic gives access to precisely one such metahistorical perception. Metahistory requires analogical reasoning, whereby one society is informed by analogy to another. Thus the Graeco-Roman world, European feudalism, Late Bronze Age Canaan and Early Iron Age Palestine, are all brought into analogical interaction in this thesis. Inference is used when no hard data is available; this implies taking a creative step, suggesting what might have been the case given the particular social conditions and forces operative at the time. This in turn depends upon a concern with the aetiology of social reality, for observed causal dynamics of society facilitate the task of inference. All these various analytical tools are of course no substitute for data, but they are of central importance if societies which yield little direct data are going to be understood with any confidence at all. As Coote and Whitelam programmatically assert:

> ... there is a pressing need to attempt a new synthesis of the history of Israel from this chronological perspective. It is an attempt to loose biblical studies from the merely descriptive or chronological histories which concentrate upon what happened, particularly in the political area, in order to ask the fundamental question of why it happened. The search for broad patterns and

> generalisations helps to throw light on periods of social change. It is necessary to view the emergence of Israel within the context of millennia-long agrarian relations and processes from the Middle Bronze Age to the present (Coote & Whitelam: 1986,114).

Controlling and informing this activity throughout this thesis will be a carefully articulated paradigm of historical materialism, to which we now turn.

PART I : METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS -
THE HISTORICAL MATERIALIST PARADIGM
AND THE RURAL-URBAN DIALECTIC

CHAPTER 2. THE HISTORICAL MATERIALIST PARADIGM

2.1. Basic Premises

In this thesis I have self-consciously adopted the historical materialist approach as the methodological framework within which I shall work. This means that I have chosen, preferentially, to work within the paradigm developed by Karl Marx and Frederich Engels. By doing so, I assert the methodological priority of the historical materialist approach over the other two major paradigms which dominate sociological theory, namely the structural-functionalism of Emile Durkheim and the "Ideal Type" approach of Max Weber. I do not reject these two models as inadequate for interpreting society, but rather recognise in the marxist approach a more substantially developed model of what a historical sociology should be. The debate between these three major sociological paradigms is vast, and not the apposite subject for this thesis. The literature which represents this debate is correspondingly voluminous. The central issues in this debate are helpfully surveyed by Giddens (1971) and Szymanski and Goertzel (1979,3-34). Some of the issues between the different paradigms will be discussed in sections 3.2 and 3.3 below.

The essential presuppositions of the methodology of this thesis may be articulated in six propositions [1]. First, humans are social animals. As Marx says in the Grundrisse; "Man is in the most literal sense of the word a zoon politikon, not only a social animal, but an animal which can develop into an individual only in society" (Marx:1977,346). Secondly, the prime need of humans in a particular society is to organise production, in the broadest sense, including both the internal production and the external acquisition of what cannot be produced within itself, by trade or forcible appropriation, as well as the distribution for consumption of what it has produced [2]. Thirdly, in the very act of living in society and organising production, humans necessarily enter into a particular system of social and economic relations, which Marx referred to as 'the relations of production' or 'the social relations of production'. Fourthly, in a society which has passed beyond the most primitive state, the producers of actual

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1. The debates within historical materialism are lively and extensive. It is not a simple matter to articulate a concise summary of some of the essential tenets of materialism which will find broad acceptance within the marxian world. The following six point schema is not an attempt to do this. Rather it articulates the central presuppositions which govern the methodology of this particular thesis. I am indebted to Ste Croix (1981,35-36) for the inspiration for this six point outline. Gandy (1979,118-120) offers a slightly more detailed ten point outline.

2. Marx and Engels in The German Ideology express it thus: "...life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself. And indeed this is an historical act, a fundamental condition of all history .... Therefore in any interpretation of history one has first of all to observe this fundamental fact in all its significance and all its implications and to accord it its due importance" (Marx & Engels:1970,48f).

necessities must produce a surplus beyond what they actually consume themselves. This surplus makes development in a society possible, for it liberates both the product of labour and labour itself from the immediate demands of consumption, so that they might be devoted to development. Fifthly, the extraction and perpetuation of such surplus has led in practice to exploitation, in particular of the primary agricultural producers. And sixthly, this exploitation gives rise to the basic conflict in society, the struggle between the classes.

A number of key analytic concepts which will be used throughout the thesis require definition at this point.

Mode of Production

"The mode of production refers to those elements, activities and social relationships which are necessary to produce and reproduce real (material) life" (Harvey:1973,199). The mode of production consists of two basic elements, and they remain constant from society to society. They are i) the forces of production and ii) the relations of production. Forces of production consist of the means of production (land, raw materials existing in nature, tools, equipment, fixed capital) and labour (human productive activity.) In class societies, the relations of production refer to the relations of the producers and the non-producers to each other and to the means of production. This presupposes some form of division of labour, or differentiation of labour in non-class societies. The ownership and control of property, the most important of the means of production, is a critical determinant in the

relations of production. The mode of surplus extraction by the non-producers from the real producers is articulated upon the given relations of production. The diagram below gives a schematic representation of the concept of the mode of production.

MODE OF PRODUCTION

FORCES OF PRODUCTION		RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION
Means of Production +	Labour	1. Relations of producers to non-producers
1.Objects of labour (land, raw materials)	Human productive activity	2. Relations of people to the means of production
2.Means of labour (tools, fixed capital)		3. Division of labour
		4. Mode of surplus extraction

This concept of the mode of production is central to historical materialism for it denotes a society's foundation or "base", on which the rest of that society ultimately depends. Marx most succinctly expressed this sentiment in the Preface to A Critique of Political Economy:

> In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of the will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general (Marx:1977,389).

The precise function of the mode of production in any given society is a much-debated matter within marxism. Popular thought is maybe more familiar with the "economism" or "dialectical materialism" most firmly espoused by the Russian Communist Party [3]. This understanding espouses the notion that only the MOP, or material base of society - the economy - has real causal efficacy in society, the political and theoretical superstructure being merely epiphenomenal. What is signified by the stipulation that the methodological foundation of this thesis is "historical materialism", is a rejection of dialectical materialism [4]. The dialectical process which Marx and Engels envisage allows to factors other than the purely economic a crucial role in the regulating of a given social formation. Engels stresses a compound determinancy rather than a unilateral determinancy, in a now often quoted letter to Joseph Bloch:

> According to the materialist conception of history, the <u>ultimately</u> determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the <u>only</u> determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase (cited in Posel:1982,130).

In conclusion, I concur with Ste Croix when he asserts:

> The alleged 'economism' of Marx is no more than the belief that out of all the elements which are operative in the historical process, it is the 'relations of production' (as Marx called them),

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3. The rise of dialectical materialism with the codification of marxism took place under Plekanov, with the first use of the term by him in 1891. See Kolakowski (1978,329-354) and McLellan (1979,65-77).

4. Following McLellan (1980,134-138) and Harvey (1973,200).

> namely the social relations into which men enter in the course of the productive process, which are the most important factors in human life, and which tend, in the long run, to determine other factors, although of course these other factors, even purely ideological ones, can sometimes exert a powerful influence in their turn upon the social relations (Ste Croix:1981,26).

Surplus or Surplus Product

The concept of surplus or surplus product is one that will be employed extensively in this thesis [5]. Proposition four above asserted that any development in society was dependent on the production of a surplus. The relations of production are in part determined by the mode of surplus extraction. The notion of surplus needs careful definition (Harvey:1973,216-240; Hindess & Hirst:1975,21-28). Firstly, a distinction must be drawn between the terms "surplus" and "surplus product" and the term "surplus value". Surplus value was used by Marx to refer to a particular form of surplus that occurred within the capitalist mode of production. The extraction of surplus value is the specific way in which exploitation takes place under capitalism, and is the distinguishing characteristic of the capitalist relations of production [6]. Ross Gandy gives a simple, but inadequate, definition of surplus product: "The surplus product is the difference between what a society

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5. As we shall observe, cities are formed through the geographic concentration of surplus product, which demands a particular mode of surplus extraction, and links urbanisation to the mode of production in a very concrete manner.

6. "Surplus value results from the working class producing a net product which can be sold for more than they receive as wages" (DMT,472). Surplus value is surplus labour expressed in capitalist market exchange terms. McLellan (1980,90-99) and Giddens (1971,46-52) provide a useful discussion of the use of this term within marxism.

produces and what the productive labourers consume" (Gandy:1979,130). It is inadequate because the consumption of the productive labourers is unqualified. This consumption is the consumption that is required to reproduce that productive labour. Harvey provides a more accurate and detailed definition:

> The social surplus is that quantity of labour power used in the creation of the product for certain specific social purposes over and above that which is biologically, socially and culturally necessary to guarantee the maintainance and reproductive power in the context of a given mode of production (Harvey:1973,238)... we may conclude that surplus has two forms. It may firstly be an amount of material product that is set aside to promote improvements in human welfare. Rosa Luxembourg thus points out that there can be no advances in civilisation without the initial creation of a surplus that can be used for purpose of overall social advancement. Secondly, the surplus may be regarded as an estranged or alienated version of the first: it appears as a quantity of material resources that is appropriated for the benefit of one segment of society at the expense of another. In all historically occurring modes of production (save those which exhibit primitive communistic forms of social organisation) the social surplus has appeared in its estranged or alienated forms. In these societies surplus may be equated with the product of alienated labour (Harvey:1973,219-220).

The mode of appropriation of the surplus product is a central element in the definition of any mode of production. It is, as well, a central determinant with regard to urbanisation; for urbanisation relies upon the concentration of a significant quantity of surplus product in one spatial location, and a specific form of relations of production which are defined not only in economic terms, but also in political, military, and ideological ways. The apprehension of the concept of surplus product is critical for this thesis, for I will argue in Section II that the conflict between the Israelite tribes and

the Canaanites and Philistines centers around the appropriation and consumption of the surplus product of the Israelites [7].

Superstructure and Ideology

A metaphor drawn from construction, of a base and superstructure, is used by Marx to describe the relationship between the mode of production and the rest of the society that is built upon it. The passage which has become the classic formulation of the metaphor is the one from the **Preface to A critique of Political Economy** quoted above (see page 13):

> The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite froms of social consciousness. The mode of production conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general (Marx:1977,389).

The superstructure consists of the whole complex of state institutions embracing the various power and societal complexes: the political, juridical, military, religious and administrative forms in their various permutations. These rest upon the economic base of society, and have a dynamic relationship with it; the economic base possessing what Althusser has called "determination in the last instance" or "overdetermination" (Althusser:1970).

Traditionally, the metaphorical edifice has been given three storeys; the economic base as the ground floor, the

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7. It is worth noting from the outset that the Israelites emerged as a nation only after the period under consideration in this thesis. During this period we can only properly talk about emergent Israel (c. 1220-1125 B.C.E.) and the Israelite tribes (c. 1125-1000 B.C.E.).

political/state superstructure as the first floor, and the ideological superstructure as the second floor (Gandy:1979,118). Ideology (in this sense refering to social consciousness in general) is taken to be a third and distinct sector in the social formation. This view needs to be carefully qualified if a serious distortion of the notion of consciousness is to be avoided. Larrain expresses this concern aptly:

> In my view the traditional distinction of three levels - the economic base and political and ideational superstructures - only has sense in terms of institutions and material organisations which are specific to these levels and which indeed have become differentiated and specialised with the development of capitalism (Larrain:1983,178-179).

It seems to me that this differentiation is not to be found in ancient Near Eastern societies, where ideational institutions (which were primarily the religious institutions) were closely aligned to the political institutions [8]. Larrain is concerned to show that in general, social consciousness cannot be located on one separate level. This is so in at least two senses: first, there is no superstructure of ideas separate from the actual functioning of the political and economic spheres, and second, there are no ideas which can be conceived as operating at one particular level and not in others (Larrain:1983,169-203). Consciousness does not operate independently of material forms. As Marx and Engels assert, "Consciousness is, therefore, from the very beginning a social

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8. Ishida (1977) illustrates this point with an analysis of the royal-dynastic ideology in the ancient Near East, with particular reference to Israel.

product, and remains so as long as men exist at all" (Marx & Engels:1970,51).

Ideology is central to the question of the superstructure. The resolution of this question is complicated by the multiplicity in the range of definitions of ideology. Sumner (1979,5) outlines no less than ten main definitions currently on offer. Of these ten, we shall follow the definition offered by Antonio Gramsci, but before his definition is presented, that of Marx and Engels will be analysed [9].

For Marx and Engels, ideology as a particular form of consciousness emerges in the following manner. As they repeatedly stress, there are particular relations of production that emerge in human history and result in human alienation. As this alienation emerges in its various material manifestations there is an attempt to resolve it cognitively rather than materially. Now this ideational solution is at heart distorting, for it creates the appearance of resolution while the actual material conditions that produce the alienation remain. This, therefore, is a false consciousness, a solution in the mind for contradictions that have not been solved in practice. This form of consciousness is what Marx and Engels call ideology. Further, ideology is also a condition for the functioning and reproduction of the system of class domination. It plays this role precisely by hiding the true relations between classes and by explaining away the

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9. The literature on the marxian problematic of ideology is vast. Larrain (1979 & 1983) provides what is in my mind the best analysis. See also Sumner (1979) and CCCS (1977).

relations of domination and subordination. For Marx, ideology was always the product of the ruling class, and always served its interests. The way in which ideology will be used in this paper will be broader than this understanding, and will follow Gramsci's definition of ideology.

Hegemony and Ideology

In every society characterised by class struggle and the exploitation of the surplus product by a non-productive dominant class, the dominant class faces the problem of maintaining its position of dominance over the majority of the population. This dominance can be maintained in one of two ways (or, more usually, a combination of both): either by persuasion, winning the free consent of the subordinate classes, or by coercion, using force to achieve the submission of the people. Antonio Gramsci is recognised as the marxist theorist who best articulates this dual mode of domination [10]. Eric Hobsbawm points out that Gramsci's formulations are not just relevant to advanced western countries, but to all situations of class conflict:

> We must, in short, beware of a purely localized "western" reading of Gramsci. Thus the struggle for hegemony <u>before</u> as well as during the transition to power is not merely an aspect of the war of position characteristic of western countries, but of all revolutionary strategy. It is naturally of special importance in countries where the core of ruling class power lies in the willing subalternity of the masses rather than in coercion, as in the west; in countries in which the ruling class, having to choose

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10. "Gramsci has the great merit of being the first marxist theorist seriously to analyse how the bourgeoisie managed to perpetuate its domination through consent rather than coercion" (McLellan:1979,186).

> between the alternatives of hegemony and force, the velvet glove and the iron fist, have chosen hegemony - though as always, keeping coercion in reserve (Hobsbawm:1982,29-30).

The key Gramscian concept is "hegemony". Hegemony is attained through intellectual and moral leadership (in ancient societies this was primarily through religion) by which the dominant group develops an ideology which is shared by other social groups as well. This results in the voluntary consent of the subordinate classes to the domination or leadership of the ruling class. Hegemony operates on the basis of persuasion, on its ability to convince the masses that the status quo is acceptable, and even desirable. But for Gramsci, hegemony never exists without the precondition of coercion:

> Hegemony is protected by the armour of coercion (Gramsci:1971,263). Civil society (the terrain of hegemonic and ideological struggle) operates within the husk of political society (the terrain of coercion and force) (Gramsci:1971,268). If the ruling class has lost its consensus, i.e. is no longer "leading" but only dominant, exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies and no longer believe what they used to believe previously (Gramsci:1971,275).

Thus a class may exercise hegemonic control over other classes, but only if it is backed up by the threat of force and coercion. In the ancient world the chief hegemonic agents were the religious functionaries who were often coterminous with the political rulers, especially in those societies which practised the divinisation of the ruler [11]. These hegemonic agents are for Gramsci the chief purveyors of ideology. As members of the

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11. Marx and Engels maintain that the first ideologists were priests (1970,51).

ruling class, or at least persons allied to the interests of the ruling class, they strove to represent the interests of the ruling class "as the common interests of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and to represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones" (Marx and Engels:1970,65-66). It is only by developing such an ideology that the ruling class can exercise hegemony over the other classes. For Gramsci the chief tool of a hegemonic class is ideology.

Conversely, the chief tool for a class seeking hegemony is ideology. It is here that Gramsci's definition of ideology differs from that of Marx and Engels. Whereas they see ideology as the product of the ruling class alone, used to disguise the material contradictions in society, Gramsci sees ideology as that form of consciousness which is used by hegemonic agents to win the consent of the other classes. The proletariat is a class that seeks hegemony, and will use ideology as a means to achieve this hegemony. By the "creation of a higher synthesis that fuses a complex of social elements in a collective will which becomes a political protagonist on the hegemonic terrain" (Gramsci:1971,326), a subordinate class wages the class struggle. We shall see how in its revolutionary origins, Israel does this very thing by developing Yahwistic faith as a hegemonic/ideological force in oppostion to the hegemonic force of Canaanite religion. At the same time, however, the class struggle is waged on the political or coercive terrain.

Conclusion

In this section I have laid out the methodological underpinnings of the thesis, and have provided definitions of some of the more important analytical concepts which will be employed in the body of this text. I now turn to a brief examination of a materialist reading of the Bible - spelling out how the biblical text should be read in light of the methodology I have articulated above.

2.2. A Materialist Reading of the Bible

A materialist understanding of literature is concerned to uncover the manner in which literature is produced in a given society, and the ideological function it plays in the social relations of conflicting classes [12]. The actual workings of class power and its effects on literature are always dynamic and fluid, enmeshed in a complex web of economic, political and cultural institutions and forces. This question becomes particularly acute when the relationship between history and literature (using literature here in the sense of literature that supposes itself to write "history") is investigated. Following Mosala (1985) and Eagleton (1976), we shall take the view that "the notion of a direct, spontaneous relation between text and history ... belongs to a naive empiricism which is to be discarded" (Eagleton:1976,70). This is to say that history cannot be rendered in literature with total objectivity, but is present in it in a disguised form. As Eagleton explains it:

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12. For a survey of the recent debates about marxism and literature see especially Posel (1982) and Slaughter (1980).

> History, then, certainly 'enters' the text, not least the 'historical' text; but it enters precisely as ideology, as a presence determined and distorted by its measurable absences. This is not to say that real history is not present in the text but in disguised form, so that the task of the critic is then to wrench the mask from its face. It is rather that history is 'present' in the text in the form of a double absence. The text takes as its object, not the real, but certain significations by which the real lives itself - significations which are themselves the product of its partial abolition. Within the text itself, then, ideology becomes a dominant structure, determining the character and disposition of certain 'pseudo-real' constituents. This inversion, as it were, of the real historical process, whereby in the text itself ideology seems to determine the historically real rather than vice versa, is itself naturally determined in the last instance by history itself... History is the ultimate signifier of literature, as it is the ultimate signified. For what else in the end could be the source and object of signifying practices but the real social formation which provides its material context (Eagleton:1976,72).

This means that the writing of history is a discursive practice, and all discursive practice is ideological practice. All written history is ideological. To fall into the trap of empiricism that distinguishes between ideological and "real" in a text is to fail to recognise that the very activity of the authors and redactors of the texts is ideological activity. We have no access to history but through the dialectical relationship between the historical events, the ideological signification of those events, and the ideological activity of the recorders of the signification of the events.

With these comments in mind, we now turn to a materialist reading of the Bible, and in our case, more particularly, a

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13. The materialist reading of the Bible is represented by a small but growing corpus, which includes as its most influential texts the works of Belo (1981), Clevenot (1985),

reading of the Deuteronomistic history [13]. This methodology asks the question in the words of Kuno Fussel:

> How do economic, political, and ideological class struggles influence the composition and reception of the biblical texts? What material presuppositions, interests and needs lead to what concepts, ideas, and theories? What are the laws regulating not only the exchange of goods but also the circulation of signs in the systems of society formation that mediate meaning? (Fussel:1984,13).

For Fussel then, the biblical text is the product of a complex amalgam of various social forces. In order to correctly apprehend the text then, two activities need to take place - a materialist history and a materialist exegesis must each be pursued. The task of materialist history is to identify the nexus of social relationships within which the text, and the traditions it embodies, is produced. The concern here is with the material practice of the society in question.

The task of materialist exegesis is twofold. Firstly, to determine which elements of the social formation led to the text being produced. And secondly, to determine the particular ideological commitment of the text and its traditions. This implies that the text possesses the ability to unite, react or interact on the political terrain. The concern here is with the material practice of the text. As Fussel observes:

> Once literature is understood as a particular form of ideological praxis, it follows that it is not to be classified as the achievement of consciousness removed from reality, but that it is a material - that is, a practico-transformative - factor of social reality... To produce and utilize literature is always at the same time to intervene and take sides in the struggle between the rival ideologies at work in societal formation, and it is therefore to make an active contribution to the shaping and

Casalis (1985), Gottwald (1979) and the two collections of essays in Gottwald (1983c) and Schottroff & Stegemann (1984).

differentiating of its contradictions (Fussel:1984,20) [14].

The biblical text is an ideological product. Simultaneously, it is an ideological force of the hegemonic terrain. It is not an agent of coercion. Rather, it functions on the level of ideology, contending for or entrenching hegemonic control of society. As such, the biblical text is a constituent part of the nexus of power relations within which it was produced, and its treatment of historical events must be understood in this light. Marvin Chaney partially applies this insight to the book of Joshua:

> That a connected narrative of a peasant revolt is not to be found in the Hebrew Bible can hardly occasion surprise. In their present form, virtually all O T narratives are the product of royal functionaries and/or priestly elites who could not be expected to transmit traditions of peasant uprisings in a sympathetic and unrefracted form. The "conquest" account in Joshua probably owes its present framework and orientation to the intense nationalism of the Josianic reform. From that perspective, "Canaan" and "Israel" were understandably viewed as nation-states and their conflict moralistically interpreted in terms of Deuteronomistic ideology (Chaney:1983,67).

Traditional scholarship has long identified the presence of the work of redactors in the biblical texts, who have given particular ideological shape to the traditions with which they have worked, as Chaney points out. No clearer example of this is to be found than the voluminous writings devoted to the study of the Deuteronomistic history - comprised of the books

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14. We may surmise that this is particularly true of literature in ancient societies where literary production did not possess the diversity it does today. We can expect that ancient literature is organically part of the class struggle far more immediately than much of contemporary literature.

15. For examples of this scholarship see Frank M. Cross

of Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings [15].

The Deuteronomistic framework and glosses can be isolated on literary grounds with considerable consistency (Gottwald:1985a, 138-139) [16]. This indicates that the purpose of the redactors has been closely studied; although generally speaking, the redactions have not been understood in terms of the class struggle. But further, the mistaken idea that the traditions, once "rescued" from the meddlings of the redactors, provide us with access to unadulterated historical data, is commonly held. Baruch Halpern expresses just such a view when writing about the song of Deborah (Judges 5):

> The historical value of the Song of Deborah can hardly be exaggerated. It is the oldest extant monument of Hebrew literature, and the contemporaneous monument of Hebrew history before the foundation of the kingdom (Halpern:1983,133).

What Halpern fails to recognise, as does Chaney (1983,70), to a lesser extent, is that the song of Deborah is <u>itself</u> ideological practice. It is a piece of literature, and must therefore be understood as all literature is to be understood, both as an ideological product and as a constituent part of the struggle for hegemonic control of society. As I will suggest below (7.3.1.) the song of Deborah might well have been an <u>ideological tool, a manifesto of emergent Israel, designed to</u>

(1973,274-289) who gives succinct argument for two editions of the Deuteronomistic history. Dumbrell (1983) examines the redactional impact on Judges, while McCarthy (1965) does the same for 2 Samuel. Birch (1976) gives an example of how this form of analysis can be applied in great detail to a specific portion of the Deuteronomistic history, in this case 1 Samuel 7-15.

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16. Gottwald (1985a) provides a list of the programmatic (redactional) texts in Deuteronomy to 1 Samuel.

challenge the hegemony of Canaanite religion - the celebration of the victory of Yahweh's peasants over the Canaanites, functioning as a rallying point for the emerging tribal confederation. Thus the class struggle between the Israelites and the Canaanites and Philistines is conducted on the ideological plane in the biblical tradition and the later text. Thus the account of the historical event of the battle in the song of Deborah must be understood in terms of its participation in the class struggle. Certainly it is the text which predates all other biblical texts (Chaney:1983,70), but it is nevertheless an ideological product and an ideological weapon. It does not give us access to "pure" history.

Conclusion

The historical materialist approach requires that all elements of society be understood in terms of the material practice of that society, and as being real material manifestations of the social relations of that society. In this thesis, therefore, the biblical text will be understood in these terms, and will be exegeted according to the method spelt out above.

CHAPTER 3. THE RURAL - URBAN DIALECTIC

Having formulated the basic methodological presuppositions which will govern this work, we now turn to an examination of the particular model which I will use to examine Israelite society prior to the rise of the monarchy - the rural-urban dialectic [17].

3.1. What is Urban ?

Before we embark on an examination of the rural-urban dialectic, a few initial definitions are necessary if we are to proceed coherently. The most important of these, for our purpose, is the definition of "urban", "town" and "city", three terms which will be used interchangeably throughout this work.

We must note at the outset that the primary concern of this thesis is not with a historically invariant model and non-specific treatment of the rural-urban relations. Rather, my concern lies with the societies of the ancient Near East, and in particular the cities of Palestine in the Early Iron Age - not with the modern capitalist city, neither with the European feudal city, the polis of the Graeco-Roman world, nor the cities of ancient India or China, nor even with the general

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17. I employ the term "dialectic" deliberately to convey the sense of the existence or action of opposing social forces, rather than using the more neutral terms "continuum", "relations" or "divide". The reasons for this will become clear as my argument progresses.

18. Sjoberg's (1960) general classification of cities into either pre-industrial or industrial must be firmly eschewed as inadequate. To categorise all pre-industrial cities as belonging to a "feudal" society is an overgeneralisation and

category "pre-industrial city" [18]. However, this does not mean that no attention will be given to cities outside of Palestine in the Early Iron Age. In order to test the model of rural-urban relations which I shall develop, I shall apply it briefly to the Graeco-Roman world and to feudal Europe. In this way the applicability of the model as an explanation of a particular social phenomenon will be demonstrated. At the same time some of its limits will be observed.

The definition of the city that will be used in this thesis is that proposed by Harvey:

> Cities are built forms created out of the mobilization, extraction and geographic concentration of significant quantities of the socially designated surplus product (Harvey:1973,238). Cities are formed through the geographic concentration of a social, surplus product, which the mode of economic integration must therefore be capable of producing and concentrating (Harvey:1973,216).

In this sense the city is a built form. The urban place is a particular physical construction that exists at a given point in space and time. It is an entity. Further, the city is in part a storehouse of fixed assets accumulated out of previous production. Here lies the crucial relationship between urbanisation and the relations of production; for the city relies on the relations of production which are able to concentrate sufficient surplus product in a given location. A city is constructed with a given technology and is built in the context of a given mode of production.

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oversimplification. Clearly some societies before the industrial revolution were feudal, while others were not. As Herbert and Thomas (1982,64) legitimately ask of Sjoberg: "How acceptable is the idea that one basic type of city existed in different parts of the world for varying phases of time within a time-span of 5000 years ?"

"City" must be contrasted with "urbanism". "Urbanism" is a social form; it is a quality rather than an entity. "Urbanism" is a way of life that takes place within the city, a way of life which is predicated upon, among other things, a certain division of labour and a certain hierarchical ordering of activity which is broadly consistent with the dominant mode of production (Harvey:1973,203).

"City" must be contrasted with "village" and "rural". What distinguish a village from a town or city ? Undeniably, urban places are larger, so that the point at which a rural village becomes a city or town should be identifiable at some point along the population-size continuum of settlements. Difficulties arise with this form of distinguishing between rural and urban settlements, because the exact point of transition on the continuum varies considerably [19].

A more adequate distinction is to be found in urban functions. Urban places have functions which distinguish them from rural settlements - functions which are various but have at least two significant qualities. Firstly, they are non-agricultural in character and secondly, they are primarily sites of consumption and exchange of surplus rather than loci of production. A simple activity-based defintion of the city, is therefore one which expresses dominance of non-agricultural functions,

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19. Herbert & Thomas (1982,6) give a survey of modern definitions of "urban" according to population size. They range from over 200 inhabitants in most Scandinavian countries, to the 30,000 which Japan requires before a settlement is declared urban.

the consumption of rural surplus product, and the exchange of agricultural production [20]. The possible activities of a city are numerous. Among the dominant activies observed in cities of antiquity are administrative, political, religious, commercial and military functions [21].

The exact relation between the rural and the urban is a matter of some dispute. There are two predominant views in this regard - the one postulating a benevolent and symbiotic relationship between town and country; the other positing a hostile and antagonistic relation between the two. I shall argue that the latter - the materialist model - offers the more convincing explanation of the relations between the rural and the urban. Before doing so it would be wise to note a warning from Saunders:

> No single body of theory and no one paradigm can be expected to provide all the answers to the questions currently being posed in urban sociology... A degree of theoretical pluralism and epistemological tolerance is an essential precondition for the future of development of the discipline (Saunders:1981,23).

3.2. The Traditional Model of Rural-Urban Relations

The classification "traditional model" is employed here to refer to one of the two major models which dominate urban

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20. In the ancient world urban places had no generative, industrial productive activity of their own. It was only after the industrial revolution that cities became significant sites of production in their own right. It is in this sense that Sjoberg's distinction has some validity.

21. Mumford (1963) has suggested that the early city should not be overregarded as an aggregate of economic functions: it is above all, for him, a seat of institutions in service of the region of which it is part, in its artistic, cultural and political purposes.

studies [22]. The "Structuralist-Weberian model", a fairly recent approach in urban studies, will not be considered in this thesis because its proponents have focused exclusively on the phenomenon of the urban in advanced capitalist societies [23].

The "traditional model" refers to a broad spectrum in urban sociology and geography which works from an eclectic base and relies on Durkheim's structural-functionalism to provide a controlling framework. Exponents of this approach are numerous; Sjoberg (1960), Mumford (1961), and Carter (1981,1983) number among the more prominent. It is variously referred to as the "Neo-Classical" or "Liberal" schools [24]. Frank S. Frick (1977) has used this approach in an analysis of

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22. "A model is an outline framework, in general terms, of characteristics of a class of things or phenomena. This framework sets out the major components involved and indicates their priority of importance. It provides guidelines on how these components relate to one another. It states the range within which each component or relationship may vary. A model is something less than a theory and is something more than an analogy. Used in the sense being considered here, a model is not a mere replica or a specific something or process" (Carney:1975,7).

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23. This model is articulated by Elliot and McCrone (1982) who set out their interpretative framework by stating that "It is not our intention to construct a detailed and extensive critique of neo-Marxism in urban sociology and certainly not to mount any sort of gladitorial display between 'Marxists' and 'Weberians'. However, we did embark on this book because we felt considerable dissatisfaction with aspects of contemporary Marxism in this area and because we felt that some valuable insights, specific concepts and perspectives derived from Weber were being ignored or summarily dismissed" (1982,11). See Saunders (1981,25-35) for a survey of Weber's contribution to urban social theory.

24. See Herbert & Thomas (1982,26-52) for a discussion of the conceptual bases of this model. Its roots are to be found in the seminal work of Louis Wirth in the 1940s.

the city in ancient Israel.

This model proposes a particular interpretation of the rural-urban typology. In the view of Sjoberg, Carter and others, the interdependence of city and country is one of the great achievements of Near and Middle Eastern societies. The town and country are not perceived to be two distinct and antagonistic systems. Rather they are understood to be elements of the same system of which there are three mutually dependent kinds of communities: the village, the nomadic camp and the city. Several criteria are offered to distinguish between the city and the village [25]. The most comprehensive of these offerings is that of Childe (1950), upon whom Frick and others rely. Childe enumerates a total of ten criteria, which can be stated succinctly as follows:

1) The presence of full-time specialists. These specialists exchange their services for food produced by the farmers, but this was a mediated rather than a direct exchange.
2) Larger, dense populations, are made possible in that the urbanites do not need space to produce food.
3) Great art, produced by the specialists.
4) The presence of writing and numerical notation.
5) Exact and predictive sciences, such as arithmetic, geometry and astronomy.
6) Tribute or taxes paid by farmers to a religious or secular administration, thus allowing for the concentration of the surplus product.
7) A society organised on the basis of residence instead of, or on top of, a basis of kinship.
8) Monumental public buildings symbolising the society's surplus.
9) "Foreign" trade made possible by the surplus.
10) A class-structured society which emerged from the unequal distribution of more plentiful property and from specialised activities. The elite contributed important

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25. It is of interest to note, at this early point, that Leviticus 25:29-34 offers a legal distinction between villages and cities, villages being unwalled, and cities being walled (Frick:1977,1-19, 93).

> functions to the society - usually religious, political, or military - but nevertheless the gap between their life and that of the peasant-farmer was very wide (Childe:1950,3-17).

Childe, in his discussion of these ten points, subdivides them into two groups of five each. The first five criteria deal with the importance of full-time specialists, supported ultimately by the ability of the farmers to produce a food "surplus", as an index of complex societal structure. The second five criteria deal with ways in which the surplus was collected and used, other than for the support of the specialists [26].

Central to Childe's differentiation is the notion of the division of labour between full-time specialists, who are non-productive, and the peasant farmers, who are the real producers of society [27]. For Mumford:

> The very notion of a settled division, of fixation of many natural activities into a single life occupation, of confinement to a single craft, dates from the founding of the cities (Mumford:1961,123).

Sjoberg expresses the same sentiment in another way:

> Awareness that market towns and small cities are distinctly non-rural entities - i.e., recognition of what are the extremes of the rural-urban continuum -

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26. As has been observed, there is no question that some form of surplus is necessary to establish an urban place, but the definitions of surplus in the two paradigms differ. "There is general agreement that an agricultural surplus product was necessary for the emergence of city forms. Much controversy, however surrounds the manner in which we should conceive of surplus and the way in which surpluses arise, are aquired and are put to use" (Harvey:1973,216).

27. Marx, as we shall see below, calls this the division between material and mental labour, and affords this division remarkable significance in the development of class and class struggle.

> makes it eminently clear that the upper class can only be perceived as urban, as an element quite foreign to village life (Sjoberg:1960,112).

No matter what the formal distinction between village and city is, the two are seen by the traditional model to belong to the same continuum, to be part of the same system and to enjoy a mutually beneficial interdependence. The rural and the urban have a benevolent symbiotic relationship. In point of fact, there is an express rejection of any view to the contrary:

> The notion that cities are not only apart from, but opposed to the life and livelihood of the country is unfounded in ecological theory. At their most "unmutual", urban-rural relations are always reciprocal (E.E. Lampard cited with approval in Frick:1977,96).

3.3. The Materialist Model of Rural-Urban Relations

In the past decade and a half urban sociology has undergone a considerable change. Along with its counterpart, urban geography, and like many other areas of sociology, it has been swept by a wave of marxist writing. The origins of the "new" urban sociology are to be found chiefly in the work of French scholars or of those who form part of a French school. Thus Lefebvre (1968 & 1970), Castells (1976 & 1977) and Lojkine (1976) are most commonly identified as the founders of the new approach, but in shaping much of the debate - and underlying the work of those who follow Castells - the influence of Louis

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28. For a critical, but sympathetic assesment of Lefebvre and Castells see Saunders (1981,149-179). Of marxist urban sociology see, Elliot & McCrone (1982,6-32). Pickvance (1976) provides an early overview of the French literature on the matter, while Harloe (1977), gives an extended summary of the marxist debate. Moore (1984) surveys the literature on the question of the rural-urban divide. Althusser's most influential text is For Marx (1970).

Althusser has been considerable [28].

The impact of the new ideas of these scholars has been substantial. Themes and issues identified and developed in Europe have been adopted with enthusiasm by a new generation of scholars in Britain and the USA, and have been interwoven with diverse strands of marxist work to provide a broad range of frameworks and perspectives which acknowledge Marx and Engels as their source and inspiration.

One of the central features of materialist urban sociology and geography, and one which complicates the task of this thesis, is its almost exclusive concern with urbanisation in capitalist societies. Castells, for example, hardly ever refers to pre-capitalist urbanisation in any significant way at all. The bulk of the most recent literature follows this pattern. A further reason for this lack of historical study is possibly to be found in the extent to which structural marxism has gained a hold on urban sociology. From its chief protagonist, Althusser, structural marxism has developed a deep suspicion of what Althusser calls "empiricism", leading away from historical concerns to a preoccupation with epistemological concerns [29]. The concern with "theory" and not "history" in the work of Castells and others has resulted in a virtual silence among marxists on the question of ancient urbanisation.

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29. Hindess & Hirst provide the baldest rejection of history: "marxism as a theoretical and political practice, gains nothing from its association with historical writings and research. The study of history is not only scientifically but also politically valueless" (1975,312).

It has remained the task of David Harvey, the marxist geographer, to provide a more detailed materialist account of the historical and economic origins of urbanisation and to begin to articulate a coherent analysis of the rural-urban dialectic in pre-capitalist social formations [30]. Prior to an articulation of Harvey's position, a brief survey of the rural-urban dialectic in Marx's thought will be made.

The notion of an antithesis between town and country finds articulation with Marx and Engels. This antithesis has been, for Marx, part of the movement and conflict around which the whole economic history of society has unfolded. This historic conflict between town and country characterises all human societies from antiquity to the period of modern capitalism. In Capital Marx writes:

> The foundation of every division of labour that is well developed, and brought about by the exchange of commodities, is the separation between town and country. It may be said, that the whole economical history of society is summed up in the movement of this antithesis (Marx:1906,387).

Further, Marx and Engels state that,

> The greatest division of material and mental labour is the separation of town and country. The antagonism between town and country begins with the transition from barbarism to civilisation, from tribe to state, from locality to nation, and runs through the whole history of civilisation to the present day (Marx & Engels:1970,68f).

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30. As Moore (1984,12) expresses it, this subject "awaits a marxian scholar who will do for rural-urban relations what Harvey, for example, has done for urbanisation: drawn together Marx's 'unarticulated insights' and the way in which he 'captures the interaction effects that led to the rapid agglomeration of production within the cities' to develop a marxian analysis of the urbanisation process."

In **The Communist Manifesto** Marx articulates his belief that the antithesis between urban and rural would be removed with the communist revolution, in which the proletariat, using its political supremacy, would wrest control of the economic from the bourgeoisie, and herald the age of a classless society. The result would be the "gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country, by a more equable distribution of the population over the country" (Marx:1977,237).

Marx does not treat rural and urban as given analytical categories standing above all history (although one could argue that at times he does tend in that direction, certainly in the the quotation from **Capital** above). Rather he attempts to give a more historically informed content to his discussion of this dialectic in history. There are clear ambiguities in Marx's use of the terms rural and urban, as indeed there are in his references to many other issues which he never pursued in depth. The temptation exists to use Marx's comments to construct historically universal categories of these terms and of the relations between them. This must be resisted, for Marx was primarily concerned to ground his theory in historically concrete situations. Gottwald articulates this admirably:

> Marxian analytic concepts are abstractions that point precisely to the relationships among people in actual social formations and specify where and what to look for in the social interaction. It simply means that we have a regular and reliable way to look at socially interactive humans in patterned structures and sequences that are shaped in broadly determinable ways (Gottwald:1985b,6).

Marx's view of the antithesis between town and country has been taken up and developed by David Harvey (1973), who argues that

cities form linkages along the chain of expropriation from satellite territory through regional cities to dominant metropolis. In the historically specific terms of this thesis this might be be for example from rural Palestine, through the Canaanite city-states, to metropolitan Amarna Egypt [31]. The cities or towns are centers of dominance, creaming off the labour, surplus and resources of the countryside and leaving it barren as they become the concentration points of economic, political and social authority and power.

There are cases where one might speak of a generative city, a city that is beneficial to its rural hinterland because it is the center of technological innovation and the catalyst for general economic growth and advancement. This phenomenon is fairly scarce, and is not to be found in the ancient world. Parasitic cities are ubiquitous in the ancient Near East, and are characterised by forms of social and economic organisation that consume the social surplus produced by the village peasantry (Harvey:197,233-234.). This dependency on rural production makes the parasitic cities vulnerable to the rural areas, which constrains them to guarantee a flow of surplus product into the city from the rural producers, through a variety of ideological, political, and military controls.

The parasitic relationship displays a crucial contradiction. This takes the form of a struggle in which the city, by virtue

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31. This immediately introduces a three tier consumption of the surplus product: i) the primary agricultural producers, ii) the local urban non-producers, and iii) the imperial or colonial overlords.

of its very constitution, has to impose demands on the village - in terms of the extraction of surplus - to maintain the life of the city, and, in most cases, the demands of the colonial power. This demand effectively threatens the viability of the *rural* agriculturalists and pastoralists, who in general terms are hard-pressed to maintain sufficient production to satisfy their own needs. The respective needs of the city and the countryside in the ancient Near East are inherently contradictory. They cannot be simultaneously and mutually pursued, for they represent two distinct and conflicting modes of production [32]. On the one hand there is the egalitarian mode production of the village peasantry of the ancient Near East, and on the other, the tributary mode of production located in the cities. Ancient Near Eastern societies were characterised by a rural agricultural base that was sustained and ubiquitous: a base which generally had an egalitarian mode of production sustaining an urban structure, with the dominant and subjugating tributary mode of production [33]. In ancient societies, rural-urban relations were fundamentally antagonistic.

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32. I take my cue for this from Harvey's statement that, "The general proposition that some sort of relationship exists between the form and the functioning of urbanism and urbanisation (and in particular the various forms of the town-country relationship) and the dominant mode of production appear entirely reasonable" (Harvey:1973,205).

33. This approximates the situation in the Graeco-Roman world (particularly in its eastern territories), which Perry Anderson describes in the following way: "The civilisation of classical Antiquity represented the anomalous supremacy of town over country with an overwhelmingly rural economy" (Anderson:1974,23). It was anomalous in that the consumers, rather than the actual producers, dominated society.

An analysis of the rural-urban dialectic contributes to an understanding of the dynamics of the class struggle in ancient societies in at least two respects. Firstly, it gives an indication of the conflict between two modes of production. It is axiomatic in marxist thought that differing modes of production may exist at the same time within one social formation, always with one dominating the other/s. Society always contains within itself conflicting modes of production. Lukacs expresses it thus:

> A particular mode of production does not develop and play role only when the mode superseded by it has already everywhere completed the social transformations appropriate to it. The modes of production and corresponding social forms and class stratifications which succeed or supersede one another tend in fact to appear in history more as intersecting and opposing forces (Lukacs:1970,45).

The model of the rural-urban dialectic conveys this sense of opposing social forces.

Secondly, the rural-urban dialectic gives a concrete spatial location for the provenance of the modes of production and the conflict that takes place between them. Any mode of production is geographically specific: indeed, its characteristics are to a large extent determined by the physical geography which forms its environment [34]. The city is a built human environment; it

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34. Marx and Engels put it this way in The German Ideology: "The first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living individuals. Thus the first fact to be established is the physical organisations of these individuals and their consequent relations to the rest of nature... the natural conditions in which man finds himself - geological, orohydrographical, climatic and so on. The writing of history must always set out from these natural bases and their subsequent modification in the course of history through the action of men" (Marx & Engels:1974,42).

is the provenance of a tributary mode of production and can be identified with a particular spatial location. The egalitarian mode of production has its locus in the rural areas. The concentration of power in each of these two modes of production is situated in a different geographic locale.

The matter of which names should be given to different modes of production is the subject of some debate. Thus far I have used the term "egalitarian mode of production" to signify the economic base of ancient Near Eastern peasant societies. Polyani (1968,149) prefers the term "reciprocal mode of production", while Hindess and Hirst (1975,41) use "primitive communist mode of production". Amin (1980,36-45) describes such a society as a "communal formation". Essentially the same phenomenon is described by the various terms. In the use of the designation "egalitarian mode of production", "egalitarian" is not intended in the absolute sense, according to which the social formation is absolutely equal in every respect. The surplus product which exists in such egalitarian formations is not appropriated by an exploiting class. Rather, it is centralised by a ruling group for collective use and redistributed according to the needs of reproduction (Amin:1980,51). Thus the term signifies a society in which the relations of production are essentially egalitarian, or reciprocal. Such a society:

> ...is characterised by a very limited development of productive forces and a limited division of labour. If there are no classes there is no surplus-product sufficient to maintain a class of non-labourers, together with their unproductive functionaries. Nor

> is there any proportionality of labour to reward. Elders may receive more than cadets and men may receive more than women. Appropriation is collective by temporary or semi-permanent co-operative groups or by ideological unities into which the collective is divided, households, kinship groups, etc. The distribution of the product follows ideological criteria (Hindess & Hirst:1975,43) [35].

In the social system of reciprocity there existed a subsistence economy, whereby those who tilled the fields, engaged in pastoralism and in crafts, were those who consumed the social surplus produced. In the extended families of the peasantry, the producers and consumers of the surplus were coterminous. Any specialised produce was integrated by a system of barter trade. "An egalitarian society does not possess the requisite mechanisms for systematic social coercion and its social coherence is therefore maintained through voluntary cooperation loosely sustained by social custom" (Harvey:1973,208). In general it is accepted that egalitarian societies are incapable of supporting urbanism because the decentralised consumption of the social product does not allow for the concentration of the social product necessary for urbanisation. The potential for stratification and the emergence of a non-productive class within an egalitarian society is often present [36]. A variety of internal and external conditions can induce such a development. The moment an egalitarian society supports a non-productive class it becomes a tributary society.

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35. The ideology refered to here is the ideology of kinship and of clan religions, which for example ensured the subjugation of women by men in communal societies (See Amin (1980,40-45)).

36. I will suggest that this is precisely what took place when Abimeleck attempted to establish an Israelite monarchy at Shechem (Judges 9) in 7.4. below.

Standing in contrast to this mode of production is the tributary mode of production, a designation used by Samir Amin to refer to all pre-capitalist class formations other than the communal. The term encompasses the feudal mode of production, the Asiatic mode of production, the slave or ancient mode of production and the African societies in their various forms [37]. David Harvey designates this broad category as a redistributive mode of production which "involves a flow of goods (or in some cases the establishment of rights over production) to support the activities of an elite" (Harvey:1973,209). This elite is generally concentrated in a particular geographic location where the surplus extracted from the country-side is concentrated and exploited, namely, the city.

Amin (1980,50-55) has identified five characteristics of such a society. The first is that the surplus product is extracted by non-economic means: this means that the surplus has been extorted by the urban non-producers as tribute in the form of taxes, corve'e, labour, rents, and the appropriation of the means of production. The second is that the essential organisation of production is based on use value and not on exchange value. This means that the product kept by the producer is intended for direct consumption by the producer. So too the product extracted by the non-producer is also intended for the consumption of the non-productive class. In

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37. "Every tributary society looks different. But all of them can be analyzed by using the concepts of tributary mode of production and the class oppostion between tributary exploiters and the exploited (peasant) producers" (Amin:1980,67).

essence the tributary mode is a natural economy, without exchange, but with tribute transfers and redistribution. Thirdly, the tributary mode is characterised by the dominance of the superstructure. In the communal mode the superstructure hardly exists. And it exists in the tributary mode in order to ensure the extraction of tribute. As Ste Croix puts it:

> In every society there has been a basic problem of production: how to extract sufficient surplus from the primary producers, who are not likely to relish their position at the base of the social pyramid and will have to be subjected to a judicious mixture of persuasion and coercion - the more so if they have come to see the favoured few as exploiters and oppressors (Ste Croix:1981,37).

Religion is one of the central mechanisms used by the hegemonic classes to extract tribute.

> A redistributive economy with its correlative social form, the rank society, can, in theory at least, be maintained through voluntary cooperation. Most rank societies of the past have been founded on a religious ideology and in some cases this may have proved to be sufficient to guarantee the perpetuation of the redistributive economy. A priesthood and a central bureaucracy may be supported willingly by a peasant population. It seems more likely however, that redistribution will be sustained through the establishment of rights over output or over the means of production (which implies stratification) - rights held by a small elite and guaranteed by force if necessary. The evidence for this lies in the emergence of political institutions and other forms (such a property ownership of some sort) in the superstructure. Fried, after an extensive search can find no examples of a purely redistributive society which did not contemporaneously possess political and legal institutions (Harvey:1973,210).

The class struggle emerges over the issue of the extraction of

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38. Dupre & Rey (1973,152) suggest that the class struggle "exists when the use of the surplus product by a group (or an aggregate) which has not contributed the corresponding surplus of labour reproduces the conditions of a new extraction of surplus labour from the producers."

the surplus product, and takes the center stage [38]. "The class struggle between peasant producers and their tributary exploiters spans the entire history of tributary formations, in Asia and Africa, as well as in Europe" (Amin:1980,54).

The fourth characteristic of the tributary mode is the false appearance of stability and even immobility. It appears to be immobile because of the dominance of use value, whereby surplus value is consumed rather than invested in technological and industrial development. The appearance of stability is false for it conceals the essential class struggle between the real producers and the surplus extractors. Finally, the class struggle within the tributary mode explains, at least in part, the external policy of the tributary class. "This class seeks to compensate for what it loses inside the society it exploits by an expansionist policy aimed at subjugating other peoples and replacing their exploiting classes. This is the motivation behind all tributary wars" (Amin:1980,55). These five general characteristics can now be applied to the historical specificity of a particular tributary society in order to tease out the precise nature of the society in question.

The dialectic between the rural and the urban in the ancient Near East is thus a dialectic between two modes of production; an egalitarian mode and a tributary mode. N.K. Gottwald (1979,462) has provided a useful schema which I have slightly adapted to represent the essential differences between the two types of social formation which existed in Palestine in the period under consideration.

RURAL egalitarian formation	URBAN tributary formation
1. village life	1. urbanism
2. minimal division of labour	2. maximal division of labour
3. tendency toward class levelling	3. social stratification
4. contractual or kin egalitarian social relations	4. imposed tributary relations
5. diffused and limited self-government	5. political hierarchy
6. noncoopertation and military self-defence	6. military imperialism
7. peasant agriculture	7. latifundist agriculture and absentee landlordism
8. barter trade	8. commercialism
9. direct and equal consumption of wealth by the immediate producers of wealth	9. concentration and consumption of surplus wealth in and by a sociopolitical elite
10. clan/tribal ideology and religion	10. statist ideology and professional religion

This schema will be employed to extrapolate the rural-urban dialectic in the relations between the Israelite tribes and the Canaanites and the Philistines. It will be demonstrated that the model of the rural-urban dialectic I have developed provides specific guidelines for explaining the nature of these relations.

3.4. The Rural-Urban Dialectic in the Slave and Feudal Modes of Production.

Prior to examing the precise nature of the rural-urban dialectic in Palestine c. 1200 - 1020 B.C.E., some observations about this relationship in other societies will be made to test this model in historically concrete situations. At this point, we should do well to recall Coote & Whitelam's (1986,114) commendation of comparative studies which enable the

dynamics of ancient Israel to be studied from the perspective of broad patterns and generalisations, throwing valuable light on the social formation of Israel.

Although a serious weakness in Sjoberg's classification of cities into two categories - pre-industrial and industrial - has been noted, there is a sense in which his categorisation holds true in a general sense, in that it can be almost universally demonstrated that pre-industrial cities are sites of consumption while industrial cities are points of primary production. This is most certainly true of the cities of the ancient Near East and of the Graeco-Roman world, and a clear difference will be noted in the rural-urban relations in the feudal world of Europe.

I shall firstly make some observations about the rural-urban dialectic in the slave mode of production [39]. A.M.H. Jones, the historian of classical antiquity writes:

> The <u>poleis</u> were economically parasitic on the countryside. Their incomes consisted in the main of the rents drawn by the urban aristocracy from the peasants... There splendours of civic life were to a large extent paid for out of these rents, and to this extent the villages were impoverished for the benefit of the towns... The city magnates came into contact with the villages in three capacities only, as tax collectors, as policemen, and as landlords (Jones:1940,268,287,295) [40].

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39. This is variously called the ancient mode or the slave mode. For further discussion on the details of this mode of production see Anderson (1974,18-106), Hindess & Hirst (1975,79-177) and Ste Croix (1981).

40. For the differences between the <u>polis</u> and the <u>chora</u> in Greece, the Hellenistic world, and the eastern Roman provinces see Ste Croix (1981,9-18).

Alexandria, the north African city, was one of the great centers of the Hellenistic and Roman world. Green makes Jones' comments historically specific when he says,

> Alexandria thrived by exploiting the chora (countryside). Raw resources nourished the industries, and wheat barley, wool and other commodities were shipped to the city in order to support the needs of the urban population. For example, a specific office for the feeding of Alexandria was created to ensure supply. In consequence, the chora became a hinterland to be exploited by the city-dwellers to meet their consumer demands. Alexandria's survival depended on the appropriation of agricultural surpluses from an alienated labour force. Moreover, within the city, the distribution of the commodities, and in particular of industrial goods, remained far from equitable. Whereas the wealthy could afford to purchase whatever appealed to them, the purchasing power of the mass of the urban population remained too low to aquire anything beyond the most immediate necessities (1985,41).

The great Antiochene orator, Libanius, in an impassioned plea to the Emperor, makes an emphatic assertion of the dependence of the cities upon the rural areas:

> Show your concern not just for the cities, but for the countryside too, or rather for the countryside in preference to the cities - for the countryside is the basis upon which they rest. One can assert that the cities are founded upon the country, and that this is their firm footing, providing them with wheat, barley, grapes, wine oil and the nourishment of man and other living beings. Unless oxen, ploughs, seed, plants and herds of cattle existed, cities would not have come into being at all. And, once in existence, they have depended upon the good fortunes of the countryside, and the good and ill that they experience arise therefrom. And you too, Sire, obtain tribute from it. In your rescripts you hold converse with the cities about it, and their payment of it comes from the land. So whoever assists the peasantry supports you, and ill-treatment of them is disloyal to you. So you must put a stop to this ill-treatment, Sire, by law, punishment and edicts, and in your enthusiasm for the matter under discussion you must encourage all to speak up for the peasants (cited in Ste Croix:1981,16).

Ste Croix makes the point that in ancient societies the peasantry generally survived better than the urban dwellers in times of drought and other disasters, for they had closer and more immediate access to the agricultural product. He indicates though, that in the Roman world this was not the case because cities were able to accumulate so much surplus that in the times of crisis the peasants would flock to the cities, rather than the urbanites to the countryside. The reason for this anomaly was that "in the Roman empire the peasantry was more thoroughly and effectively exploited than in most other societies which rely largely on peasant populations for their food supply" (Ste Croix:1981,14).

In the Hellenistic east the village peasantry remained the primary productive unit. This was so even under the impact of the urbanisation of the Seleucids, Ptolemies and Romans, although the viability of the peasant villages was severely stressed. Jones expresses it this way:

> The political life of the inhabitants of the agricultural belt was unaffected; their unit remained the village, and they took no part in the life of the city to which they were attached. Economically they lost by the change. The new cities performed no useful economic function, for the larger villages provided such manufactured goods as the villages required, and the trade of the country-side was conducted at the village markets. The only effect of the foundation of the cities was the creation of a wealthy landlord class which gradually stamped out peasant proprietorship. Culturally the country-side remained utterly unaffected by the Hellenism of the cities; peasants continued to speak Syriac down to the Arab conquest. The only function the cities performed was administrative; they policed and collected the taxes of their territories (Jones:1973,293f).

The picture which has emerged from this brief discussion of the

city in the eastern part of the Graeco-Roman world serves to substantiate the thesis that the rural-urban relations are inherently antagonistic; that the cities are parasitic upon the countryside, contributing little of value to the rural areas, but extracting the surplus product to the detriment of the village peasantry and to the benefit of the tribute consuming class.

A different picture emerges from an examination of the cities in the feudal mode of production [41]. With the rise of the feudal mode in Europe, the rural-urban dialectic underwent a number of important adaptions. The locus of political and religious power was no longer the cities but the countryside, vested in the feudal lords. The cities became sites, not so much of consumption, but of trade and manufacture, with an emergent "middle class" which came increasingly into conflict with the feudal power structures. As Perry Anderson perceptively observes:

> ... the feudal mode of production was the first to permit it [that is urbanisation] an <u>autonomous development</u> within a natural agrarian economy. The paradigmatic mediaeval towns of Europe which practised trade and manufacturing were self-governing communes, enjoying corporate political and military autonomy from the nobility and the church. Thus a <u>dynamic opposition</u> of town and country was alone possible in the feudal mode of production: opposition between an urban economy of increasing commodity exchange, controlled by merchants and organized in guilds and corporations, and a rural economy of natural exchange, controlled by nobles and organized in manors and strips, with communal individual peasant enclaves (Anderson:1974,150).

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41. For a discussion of the feudal mode of production see Anderson (1974,147-196) and Hindess & Hirst (1975,221-259). Amin (1980,63-65) has some pertinent comments about the role of the city in this mode of production.

The feudal mode of production demands a significant adaption of our model of the rural-urban dialectic if the model is to be applied to that period. In historical terms this adaption was the necessary precursor the development of merchant capitalism and then industrial capitalism, with its highly productive cities. The feudal cities, freed from the immediate constraints of the non-productive, tribute extracting ruling class, who had relocated themselves in the countryside, were able to develop independently of the restrictive nature of such a ruling class, and begin a process of production which would increase the cities' productive abilities [42]. As long as the ruling consuming class remained the dominant class in the city, this possibility was denied.

Marx saw the different relations between town and country in the various epochs very clearly:

> Ancient classical history is the history of cities, but cities based on landownership and agriculture; Asian history is a kind of undifferentiated unity of town and country (the large city, properly speaking, must be regarded as a princely camp, superimposed on the real economic structure); the Middle Ages (Germanic period) starts with the countryside as the locus of history, whose further development then proceeds through the opposition of town and country; modern history is the urbanization of the countryside, not, as among the ancients, the ruralization of the city" (Marx:1964,77-78).

This brief application of the rural-urban model to two particular societies indicates that it is not a universally

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42. This shift in the geographic location of a particular class, confirms my earlier assertion that the model of the rural-urban dialectic is valuable because, in part, it indicates the specific spatial locations of the various classes.

valid model for explaining all rural-urban relations. The model does not satisfactorily fit the rural-urban relations of European fuedalism. Nor would it strictly apply to capitalist societies. But it is applicable to the rural-urban relations in the Graeco-Roman world, and I shall now demonstrate that it is specifically suited to explain the rural-urban relations in Palestine c. 1200-1020 B.C.E.

PART II :

THE RURAL-URBAN DIALECTIC IN PALESTINE :

ISRAEL VIS-A-VIS THE CANAANITES AND THE PHILISTINES

CHAPTER 4. INTRODUCTION AND INTENTION

No period in the history of ancient Israel is currently the focus of more attention and controversy than the period of its origins, no question more pressing than the precise nature of its social formation prior to the monarchy. The already vast literature on this period continues to burgeon. Stimulated by George Mendenhall's programmatic article which appeared in the **Biblical Archaeologist** in 1962, the debate reached maturity with the publication of N.K. Gottwald's magnum opus **The Tribes of Yahweh** (1979) [1]. There exists little possibility of an exhaustive treatment of the debate in this thesis. The issues are numerous, and many are quite beyond its scope.

The intention in this, the second part of the thesis, is to use the model of the rural-urban dialectic to analyse the material practice of the Israelite tribes c. 1200-1020 B.C.E., paying particular attention to the relations between the Israelites and their co-inhabitants of Palestine, the Canaanites and the Philistines. My concern lies with the aetiology of relations of production which emerged in Palestine in this period, rather than a descriptive account of what took place. I intend to demonstrate that the model of the rural-urban dialectic which I have proposed, provides the analytical tools with which to understand more effectively the social dynamics between the Israelites and the Canaanites and Philistines.

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1. For a survey of the literature see Greenspahn (1983) and Gottwald (1985,631-633).

In order to do this I shall first examine the nature of the mode of production in Palestine in the early Iron Age. This will give some hints as to what we might expect to observe of the articulation of rural-urban relations in this period. I shall then turn to an investigation of the three societies in question, making an analysis which will follow the chronological order of their appearances in Palestine. Thus the Canaanites will be examined first, followed by the Israelites, and finally, the Philistines.

The Israelites emerge in Palestine within the context of the Canaanite domination of the territory. The Israelites are thus defined from the outset, both in their self-conception and in terms of the social relations of the period, in contradistinction to the Canaanites. The causative forces of the conflict which emerges between the two societies will be understood as a class struggle between the rural peasantry of the Israelites and the urban tribute-exacting class of the Canaanites. This class struggle takes a particular form and has particular results which will be elucidated in terms of the model of the rural-urban dialectic.

At some point in the late twelfth century (probably associated with the defeat of the Canaanite kings in the war of Deborah c. 1125 B.C.E.) the Canaanite domination of the Israelites began to wane. Concurrently, there was gradual build-up of Philistine power on the southern coastal plain, which eventually resulted in the productive activity of the Israelite peasantry once again being exploited by a non-productive class - this time the urban Philistines. Part II, therefore, is an

examination of the rural-urban dialectic in Palestine c. 1200-1020 B.C.E. with particular reference to the Canaanites, Israelites and Philistines.

CHAPTER 5. THE MODE OF PRODUCTION IN PALESTINE

The force of the historical materialist paradigm demands that our analysis begin with a treatment of the mode of production in Palestine. As Marx asserts:

> In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material practice. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness (Marx:1977,389).

Any attempt to apprehend the material practice of a society thus needs to begin with the mode of production, although this does not imply that there exists an absolute economic determinism in society. We therefore turn to a discussion of the mode of production in Palestine in order to set the scene for what is to follow.

Fernando Belo (1981) and more recently Norman Gottwald (1983b & 1985c) have argued that the Palestinian mode of production is best understood as some form of the Asiatic mode of production [2]. Belo (1981,26-30) prefers the designation sub-Asiatic mode of production and Gottwald (1985b) the multilinear model, developed among others by Hobsbawm and Melloti (Bruger & Hanson:1983,1-37). Both Belo and Gottwald assert the need to adapt the model to the Palestinian realities rather than foist

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2. Gottwald's preference for the Asiatic mode of production is a clear shift from the position he held in The Tribes of Yahweh (1979,391-400), where he understood Canaanite society to be essentially feudal.

upon Palestine the designation "Asiatic mode of production"; hence Belo's qualifying prefix, sub-Asiatic mode of production.

The concept of the Asiatic mode of production occupies a controversial status in marxist thought, although it has gained greater currency in recent years [3]. Godelier provides one of the more succinct definitions of the Asiatic mode of production:

> The concept of the Asiatic mode of production designates a specific, original mode of production to be confused neither with the ancient slave mode of production nor with the feudal mode of production.
>
> The very essence of the Asiatic mode of production is the existence of primitive communities in which ownership of land is communal and which are still partly organised on the basis of kinship relations, combined with the existence of State power, which expresses the real or imaginary unity of these communities, controls the use of the essential economic resources, and directly appropriates part of the labour and production of the communities which it dominates.
>
> This mode of production constitutes one of the possible forms of transition from classless to class societies, perhaps the most ancient form of this transition, and contains the contradiction of this transition, i.e. the combination of communal relations of production with embryonic forms of the exploiting classes and of the state (Godelier:1982,212).

Arguably, the most critical determinant of this particular form of society lay in the manner in which such a society was organised in order to best exploit the natural resources. The

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3. For a discussion of the history of the concept see Dunn (1982). Godelier (1978) and Anderson (1979,462-549) discuss the concept with relation to specific societies. See also Gandy (1979,18-25) and Hindess & Hirst (1975,178-221) for a more theoretical treatment.

classic Asiatic societies - India, Mesopotamia and Egypt - were riverine societies, and the extensive hydraulic projects of the great alluvial valleys required large scale co-operation under a centralised authority. The determinative role of the the artificial irrigation schemes in the asiatic mode of production is stressed by Godelier (1978,222) and Mandel (1971,122) who follow the Wittfogel thesis (Wittfogel:1957. See Bruger & Hannan:1983,12-21). Large scale agriculture in these regions depended on irrigation from the great river systems. The realisation and control of the hydraulic projects had a centripetal influence on the societies, demanding new productive forces and relations of production. A centralised bureaucratic state emerged to co-ordinate the individual communities under its higher economic command. In such a way the state suceeded in concentrating the greater part of the social surplus in its hands, thus causing the appearance of social strata maintained by this surplus and constituting the centralised and dominant power in society (Mandel:1971,116-139). This centralisation and accumulation of surplus led to the development of cities of considerable size and influence. It was from such an economic and political base that the great powers of the ancient Near East were able to dominate Palestine and their other satellite territories [4].

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4. We must note that Konrad & Szelenyi (1979) argue that the mechanism which centralised power in the Asiatic mode of production was not the maintenance of hydraulic works (the centerpiece of Wittfogel's analysis), but the development of large standing armies. Given this view, I would contend that Palestine still does not qualify for the Asiatic mode of production, for large professional armies were not at all common in the territory.

The crucial difference between the classic Asiatic powers and Palestine was the absence of hydraulic works as the basis for agriculture and the economy in the latter. Thus Belo qualifies his use of such a designation. Palestine was not dependent on a river system. It was seldom, if ever, dominated by a centralised state - the brief life of the Israelite united monarchy bears testimony to the essentially centrifugal force of the Palestinian geopolitical construct. Small independent, autonomous city-states (sometimes in some form of a coalition, as with the Philistines) were the norm in Palestine. Whether these societies can be understood as having an Asiatic mode of production or some variant of it, is to my mind rather questionable. There is no doubt that Palestine was almost continuously within the colonial orbit of the Asiatic mode of production [5]. But this, even when coupled with other common characteristics such as self-sufficient village communities and the absence of private land ownership, does not make a convincing argument for asserting that Palestine had some form of an Asiatic mode of production. Even Belo's qualification smacks of the need to fit a particular situation into a predetermined category.

Gottwald uses the term "Asiatic mode of production" in a discussion of monarchic Israel, where the degree of centralisation was more considerable than at any other period

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5. The term "Asiatic mode of production" is essentially a macro-sociological term, designating the mode of production of vast territories. Within the vast territories, regional variations must surely have occurred, and in bordering territories, a quite different mode of production might have been in operation.

in Palestine's history. He attributes the process of centralisation to the cumulative effect of a number of factors, such as defence, administrative and religious structures and food storage, rather than the need to organise large hydraulic projects (Gottwald:1983b,28-29; 1985c,13). These factors are common to most human societies, and result in or arise from greater or lesser degrees of centralisation.

Due to the fact that the Palestinian mode of production does not precisely fit a specific pre-capitalist mode of production (the slave, the asiatic or feudal modes of production), I should argue that the broad term "tributary mode of production", as defined by Amin (1980,50-55), be used to designate the mode of production in Palestine. It will not be sufficient merely to use this term without giving it historical specificity, which I shall do in the chapters which follow. I shall also use the term "Palestinian mode of production", a term historically and geographically specific [6], to refer to the particular form which the tributary mode of production took in Palestine, although there might be legitimate theoretical objections to this. I use it, then, not to propose that there exists another type of a pre-capitalist mode of production, but simply to designate more precisely the type of tributary mode of production extant in Palestine.

If Palestine has a tributary mode of production, we can then

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6. "Palestinian" is preferred to "Canaanite mode of production", because Palestine is a solely geographic term, while Canaanite is ambiguous, having both geographic and racial connotations.

expect to find rural-urban relations consistent with those we have observed in the preceeding theoretical chapters.

Given Belo and Gottwald's designation of this mode of production as Asiatic, we find rural-urban relations that are essentially the same. As Brugger and Hannan observe:

> ... the Asiatic cites were not loci of alternative principles of organisation which attempted to impose, at first, slavery and then a free labour market upon the countryside (as in the slave and feudal modes of production). They were rather creatures of a despotic state which only related to the village communities in its desire to ensure taxation and forced labour to maintain hydraulic (water transport/irrigation) and communication works. The cities were the result of a parasitic state structure (Brugger & Hannan:1983,10).

Even if the mode of production in Palestine were to be identified as Asiatic, we could expect to find the same rural-urban articulation, namely that of antagonistic relations engendered by tributary relations of production.

CHAPTER 6. THE CANAANITES - AN URBAN TRIBUTARY SOCIETY

Palestine has been populated by village peasantry from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods (7500-3150 B.C.E.). Contemporary urban geographers conceive of Palestine as being the location of urban genesis, with the seminal form of the city emerging in the region c. 7000 B.C.E.(Carter:1983,11). The walled city appeared in the Early Bronze Age, 3150-2200 B.C.E., with Jericho being identified as one of the oldest urban centers known today (Kenyon:1979,66-119). The urban centers which the Israelites were in conflict with in Late Bronze IIb had their genesis in the Middle Bronze Age (Frick:1977,182-185; Kenyon:1979,148-180), and appear to have continued until the Late Iron period. It is the relationship between these two ancient and enduring forms of human settlement - peasant villages and cities - which will be the focus of discussion in the chapters which follow.

As Coote and Whitelam (1986,113) suggest, the history of ancient Israel should be approached on the metahistorical level, which would include the period from the Middle Bronze Age to the present. Such a vast treatment is quite beyond the scope of this thesis. What will be attempted is to study the rural-urban dialectic in Canaan [7] from the Late Bronze Age through the transition to the Early Iron Age. This then is a

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7. "Canaan" here refers to Egypt's Syri-Palestinian territories which covered the six hundred km from the Negeb in the South to Carcemish in the North, including the entire western coastland and its hinterland.

small contribution to the extended chronological study proposed by Coote and Whitelam.

6.1. Canaan in Colonial Context

As we have observed, cities often form linkages along a chain of expropriation - from a satellite territory through regional cities to dominant metropolis. The superstructural imposition of a colonial state apparatus by a colonial power upon a territory affects the relations of production in the territory to differing degrees. It is therefore important to locate a territory under consideration within the context of its broader political relations.

In the Late Bronze Age, Canaan was governed by Egypt according to administrative methods set-up by Thut-mose III (1490-1450 B.C.E.). These crystallised under his successors and lasted for over three hundred years, still operating at the time of the emergence of Israel. This Egyptian domination of Canaan was characterised by the following features (Mazar:1971a):

1. The entire region was governed as an Egyptian province.
2. The local rulers were maintained if co-operative, but replaced by an Egyptian family member if not.
3. Sons of the Canaanite petty rulers were often dispatched as hostages to Egypt.
4. Egyptian administration of surplus extraction was guaranteed by garrisons (consisting of Egyptian troops and local conscripts) located in fortified and strategic cities, which also protected the key trade routes. A number of Egyptian fortresses were established to further maintain coercive control of the region.
5. Worship of Egyptian divinities was encouraged. The establishment of Egyptian sanctuaries was designed to increase Egyptian hegemony over the region.

6. Akkadian language and cuneiform writing were maintained. The correspondence between Canaanite rulers and pharaoh's court was conducted in Akkadian.

7. A modest but constant flow of tribute from Canaan to Egypt was maintained [8].

Egypt was the dominant colonial urban society in this period, maintaining control of surplus extraction from its colonial territories in Canaan, and guaranteeing the efficient transfer of the surplus from colony to metropolitan center, by locating its points of power in the regional urban centers. These cities extracted the surplus product from their rural hinterlands in order to meet not only their own needs, but also the needs of the imperial power.

Egyptian control over Canaan went through a serious decline in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. This decline was part of what is now generally accepted to be a major disintegration of civilisations in both the Near East and the Mediterranean region in the Late Bronze period. Archaeological evidence shows a massive devastation at the end of the Bronze Age in Western Asia: many of the cities of Anatolia, Syria and Canaan were destroyed in this period (Stiebling:1980,12). The Hittite empire to the north of Canaan, after tremendous upheavals in the 14th and 13th centuries, broke up during the reigns of its last kings, Arnuwanda III and Shuppiluliuma II (Hoffner:1973). The 14th century witnessed the zenith of the Mycenean civilisation, but within a century most of its cities were destroyed (Stiebling:1980). During the Amarna period (c.

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8. The Amarna letters make it clear that Canaan was not a source of immense income for the pharaohs (See EA 3-5,7-11,24-29).

1450-1350 B.C.E.) Egypt's hold on Syria-Palestine slackened somewhat, allowing for local rivalries among Canaanite rulers to emerge. In the closing years of the 19th and early 20th dynasties [9], Egypt was severely threatened with attack from both Libya and Palestine, which resulted in the dramatic decline of Egyptian power under the pharaoh's Rameses III - XI (Malmat:1971; Faulkner:1975; Cerny:1975).

The Syrio-Palestinian territories were valuable assets to Egypt, for they guaranteed control of the crucial land and sea trade routes with Egypt's major trading partners, as well as acting as a defence buffer in times of war. Egypt's ability to exercise and retain suzerainty in the region was often indicative of the general fortunes of Egypt. At its strongest its dominion over Canaan was secure; at its weakest the territories were lost or tenuously held. In the Early Iron age (1200-1020 B.C.E.) Egyptian control of Palestine was very weak, thus allowing the local political powers to determine their own fortunes to a very large extent.

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9. The dates of the Egyptian dynasties are : 18th dynasty - 1570-1320 B.C.E.; 19th dynasty- 1320-1200 B.C.E.; 20th dynasty- 1200-1085 B.C.E.

6.2. Amarna Canaan

The clearest evidence we have of the situation in Canaan in the Late Bronze period comes from the Amarna correspondence [10]. The majority of these texts were written by the local Canaanite rulers to the pharaoh in Egypt, and reflect the tensions that these petty rulers were facing. They provide an indication of the rural-urban relations in Canaan at the time, as well as the relations of the Canaanite vassals to the Egyptian overlords. "The Amarna correspondence reflects the intimate interlock between the two systems, but it also shows the growing strains of the contradictory interests of the Egyptians and Canaanites" (Gottwald:1979,394). From the vantage point of these texts, we may infer the nature of the articulation of rural-urban relations not only for the Late Bronze Age, but backward to the Middle Bronze Age as well as forward to the Early Iron Age.

The Amarna material has been variously employed by scholars wishing to reconstruct the situation in Palestine prior to the emergence of Israel. Albrecht Alt (1966,138-157), for example, uses the texts to illustrate territorial formations in his study of the settlement patterns of the Israelites. George Mendenhall (1973,122-141) relies on the letters for information with regard to distinct social groupings, such as the 'apiru,

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10. The Amarna period is the name given to the close of the Egyptian 18th dynasty (1570-1320 B.C.E.), the time of Akhenaton and his successors (Stiebling:1983; Aldred:1975). The Amarna Correspondence consists of some 350 cuneiform tablets in various states of disrepair, most of which were found on the ruins of Akhenaton in 1887. These texts with their translations are to be found in Mercer (1939). Cf Albright (1975a) for commentary on the texts.

as does Marvin Chaney (1983,72-78) in his study of social banditry. Baruch Halpern's (1983,65-79) treatment is concerned with the political situation in Canaan, and John Halligan (1983,15-24) employs the texts for a reconstruction of the role and nature of peasantry in the Amarna period.

Throughout the Late Bronze Age, human settlement patterns in Canaan were characterised by numerous small city-states which dominated fertile plains, populated by village peasantry, and which controlled the trade routes through the region. These city-states are best known to us through the Amarna correspondence.

A typical city-state of the Amarna period consisted of a small walled city located near a perennial water supply. A.R. Millard describes the dominant feature of these cities, the walls [11] saying:

> Prior to that time fairly substantial walls of brick or stone surrounded the major cities, pierced by fortified gateways. These were superseded by more massive systems, featuring a wall on top of a steeply sloped earth bank (glacis) stablised with a plaster face, and held at the foot by a heavy stone wall. At some sites a ditch was dug beyond the wall, its spoil contributing to the bank, while at others the bank was made up of earth and rubbish cleared from the foot of the mound. The chief cities were greatly enlarged, a bank and a ditch enclosing enormous level areas beyond the tell. Carefully built gateways led through the ramparts, the vaulted passage sufficiently wide to allow a chariot to pass (Millard:1973,39).

The city-states were autonomous, and were often in conflict

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11. The cities of the Canaanite period belong to the city type which was dominated by its defensive walls. Later cities, most notably Jerusalem, were dominated by the citadel - the palace-temple complex on top of an elevation within the walls.

with each other. Two cities seldom shared a king, and although alliances were common, they were very tenuous and mostly short-lived. The tenacity of this independent, autonomous political state system is probably to be explained, at least in part, by the fact that the land of Canaan possessed very little geographic unity. The systems of mountains and valleys subdivided the land and tended to accentuate local differences. There existed no unified political state in Canaan prior to the Davidic monarchy; and the history of this monarchy indicates the tenuous nature of the attempts to create and maintain a national state in Palestine. Yohanan Aharoni articulates this perception with clarity:

> Palestine is by nature a diversified land being composed of the most divergent types of terrain located side by side... many of the hilly regions served as barriers which separated the fertile valleys from one another. It is not surprising that this brought about the development of independent urban settlement and the political fragmentation of the country (Aharoni:1979,241. See Smith:1966,59).

Canaan was settled by small pockets of humanity, kept economically, politically and socially separate by the physical geography. Rivers, mountain ranges, valleys, plateaux and deserts all played their part in determining the nature of the Canaanite social formation, and those of the societies which emerged in later periods.

Amarna Canaan was a society based on village peasantry. The egalitarian mode of production had superimposed upon it the cities with their tribute extracting class. To assert that Canaan was based upon a peasant society is almost a truism, for the entire ancient Near East and to a considerable extent the

Graeco-Roman world were worlds based upon the economic foundation of village peasantry [12]. It is salient to note that in the present, just as in the past, peasants constitute the majority of humankind. Peasantry is a remarkably durable form of human existence. There exist numerous examples of peasant societies remaining unchanged over centuries, despite extensive regional political changes. Sean Freyne makes such an observation when he remarks that the peasantry of first century B.C.E. Galilee was essentially no different to the peasantry of Israel in the 8th century B.C.E.:

> Thus it would seem that the picture which has emerged for Ptolemaic times is an accurate reflection of existing land ownership relations of a much earlier period. Our conclusion ... that there was no great uprooting of Galileans in the transfer from Israelite to Assyrian control in the 8th century would strengthen this conclusion, and so we are faced with a fairly stable, centuries-long situation, which was not totally disrupted through Galilee's contact with the hellenistic monarchies (Freyne:1980,159).

Without doubt regional political changes did affect the peasantry to a greater or lesser extent, but the essential nature of the peasantry - its agricultural and pastoral patterns, land tenure, kinship and clan structures, etc. - can be expected to have remained constant. This is an important observation for it gives reason for hope that the nature of Israelite peasantry in the Early Iron Age is not beyond description, despite the paucity of direct evidence. The analogies which may be drawn from comparative situations give

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12. Gottwald (1979,205-229), Halligan (1983) and Chaney (1983) discuss the peasantry in the Amarna period. Ste Croix (1981,208-226) and Garnsey (1976) do the same in respect of the Graeco-Roman world.

us a basis upon which to infer what the nature of Israelite peasantry might have been a few centuries later (Coote & Whitelam:1986,111-114). Hence the significance of the Amarna letters for our task. The material from later periods, for example the period of the Israelite monarchy, may profitably be used as a comparative source as well.

" Peasantry" is a general term which refers to those who labour on the land and possess their own means of production - tools and the land itself. They live in the country, based in villages and depend on agriculture and pastoralism for their existence. A defining characteristic of peasantry is that it must pay a rent or tribute to maintain its possession of the land. The social relations of peasantry may take many diverse forms, precisely because the concrete historical circumstances in which peasantry occur are extremely varied (DMT, 363-365) [13].

The mode of production of peasantry is generally regarded as an egalitarian mode of production. However, any given peasant society need not be totally homogeneous, but can evidence considerable internal differentiation. This differentiation can take the form of three categories of peasants. The first are the rich peasants, who own large tracts of land and employ

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13. The literature on peasantry is vast. Bundy (1979:4-13) provides a concise overview of this literature. For definitions of peasantry see Mintz (1973) and Ennew,Hirst & Tribe (1977). The latter argue that peasantry cannot be regarded as a distinct general type of economy. Meillassoux (1973) examines the relation of peasant economies to kinship relations, a factor of importance in our discussion of Israelite peasant tribes.

other peasants to work the land. While they are dependent on the land, their interests are not often in conflict with the interests of the urban dwellers. Middle peasants, who have a secure hold on their land, enjoy relative security. Some poor peasants might still own their land, but many lose it, going either to the cities to join urban work gangs or the military, or leaving the land to join bandit groups. These poor peasants form the lumpen class. The exact form of differentiation depends on the material conditions of the particular time and place. We shall observe how in the Late Bronze and the Early Iron periods, the peasantry of Canaan was extremely hard-pressed to survive. Correspondingly, their internal differentiation was not so marked, with the overwhelming majority of peasants belonging to the latter two groups. The social relations which result in such indigence of the peasantry lead to the peasant class struggles, a characteristic of peasant societies. As Amin asserts:

> The class struggle between peasant producers and their tributary exploiters, spans the entire history of tributary formations, in Asia and Africa, as well as in Europe (Amin:1980,54).

The Canaanite and Ugaritic word for peasant is <u>hupsu</u>. It occurs some eleven times in the Amarna letters (EA 77:36; 81:33; 85:12; 112:12; 114:22,55; 117:90; 118:23,37; 125:27; 130:42). The use of this term in the texts, provides access to the circumstances in which the peasantry had to pursue their material existence. The class struggle between the Canaanite rulers and the peasantry finds clear expression in these texts.

The following extracts from the letters of the king of Byblos, Rib Addi, indicate that he was contending with a hostile peasantry.

> I am afraid that my peasants
> will slay me. (EA 77:36,37)
>
> From whom shall I be protected?
> From my enemies
> or from my peasants?
> Who shall protect me? (EA 112:10-13)
>
> I fear my peasants. (EA 117:87-90)
>
> What shall I say to my peasants?
> Their sons, their daughters
> have come to an end, (and) the wooden implements
> of their houses, because they are given to
> Iarimuta
> for the deliverance of our lives. (EA 85:10-15)
>
> If there are now no
> provisions of the king
> for me to distribute
> then my peasants
> will rebel (EA 130:39-42).

Clearly the peasantry are a powerful factor in the social formation of Byblos. They are a threat to the domination of the urban elite; a threat which is articulated by the representative of the class interests of the urban elite - the king. The condition of the peasantry is severely strained, resulting in their disquiet and the threat to Rid Addi [14]. The economic survival of the peasantry was strained by three crucial factors; siege and the disruption of war, surplus extraction (which often took the form of tribute to end a siege: EA 85:10-15), and famine.

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14. Halligan notes that, "In the Amarna period the subsistence level of the hupsu was not being met" and that "the plight of the peasant in the Amarna period was far more desperate than that seen in the Ugaritic literature (Halligan:1983,16-17).

The foreign ruling class located in the cities [15] expropriated the produce of the peasants to meet their own needs as well as the demands of the Egyptian overlords. The primary exploitation of the peasants came from the local elite against whom the peasants rebelled. To suggest, as Halpern (1983,58) does, that the unrest of the peasants constituted a revolt against Egypt is to misunderstand basic socio-economic dynamics. The peasants would revolt against their immediate oppressors, not the distant Egyptian overlords. The class conflict is with the immediate tribute extractors. The petty princes are in turn involved in conflictual relations with the pharaoh. What Halpern does is simply to reflect the class commitment of the Amarna letters. The majority of the Amarna letters originate from the local aristocratic class: the tendency, we may confidently expect, would be for these petty princes to cast the blame for their rebellious peasants on a source other than themselves. What better way to gain further fiscal aid than to make the pharaoh feel responsible for the condition of the peasantry?

The repeated insistence in the correspondence that the peasants gravitated to the cities in order to survive needs careful investigation; for the general pattern in peasant societies is for the urbanites to move to the rural areas in times of economic crisis (Ste Croix:1981,14). This might be a correct

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15. "A high proportion of the Palestinian chiefs bore Indo-Aryan names while the proportion of the Indo-Aryans decreases as we go downward on the social scale" (Albright:1975a,104,109). See also Mercer (1939,643ff), Gottwald (1979:393) and Gray (1964,45).

reflection of actual conditions, where the dislocation of the peasantry from their land due to famine, war or economic exploitation was thoroughgoing, and the cities were sites of distributing grain which had come from Egypt. On the other hand, it may well be a strategy on the part of the petty princes to extort as much as they could from the pharaoh, or to lighten the tribute he expected of them.

Between the domains of the cities roamed a third social grouping of importance in Amarna Canaan, the landless, the outlaws and the runaway slaves - called comprehensively 'apiru. Their class interests often coalesced with those of the peasantry, although they could well have harrassed the village peasantry just as they harrassed the city-states and caravans. The 'apiru were bandits, most likely armed who waged a constant guerilla type war on the city-states, attacking caravans along the trade routes and generally disrupting the status quo which the Canaanite rulers sought to maintain. Eric J. Hobsbawm has made a detailed study of the phenomenon of banditry. He comments that:

> Social banditry is universally found wherever societies are based on agriculture...and consists largely of peasants and landless labourers ruled, oppressed and exploited by someone else - lords, towns, governments... (Hobsbawm:1981,19-20). [16]

Marvin Chaney (1983,72-93) provides a detailed analysis of the 'apiru as social bandits, in which he relies heavily on the work of Hobsbawm. In it he makes a number of observations of

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16. Horsley & Hanson (1985,48-76) give a useful comparative analysis of banditry in Palestine in the Second Temple period.

importance to our study. Firstly, there exists a remarkable uniformity in the social phenomenon of banditry in different ages. Secondly, bandits generally emerge from dislocated peasantry and therefore tend not to violate the class interests of the peasantry. In peasant class struggles, bandits often play a crucial role. The leaders of the 'apiru might often have been disaffected nobles from the city-states (EA 298:20-27), a common phenomenon in social banditry [17]. The bandit brigades, which were generally small, preyed on the trade routes and city-states left vulnerable after internecine conflict among the city-states. These bands of 'apiru flourished most strongly in the inaccessible terrain on the cusps of the various city-states; often playing one city-state off against another.

The 'apiru, combined with the hard-pressed peasantry, resulted in a force which left the scattered and competitive groups of urbanised elite in Canaan struggling to maintain their control over the means of production and ensure their political supremacy in the region. The articulation of rural-urban relations in Amarna Canaan clearly conform to the relations which the model of the rural-urban dialectic would lead us to expect.

Chaney gives succinct summary to the situation in Canaan prior to the emergence of Israel.

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17. It is more than likely that David, on fleeing Saul's court, became precisely such a disaffected noble: gathering around him various outcasts (1 Samuel 22:1-2) he became a bandit leader, who even hired out his force to a Philistine king.

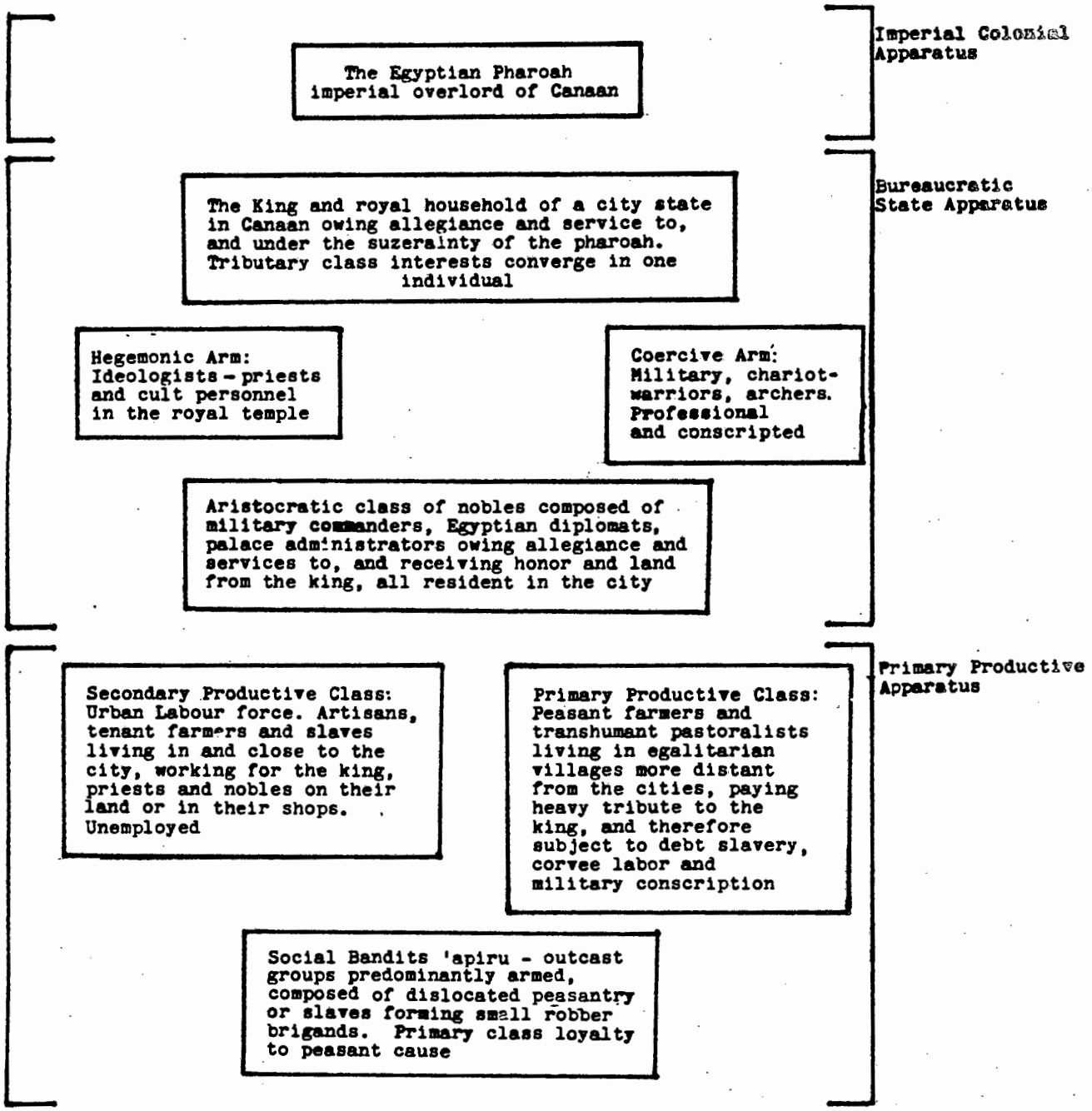
> All would agree that Late Bronze Canaan comprised a miscellany of agrarian city-states, each with its own petty prince, but under the nominal suzerainty of Egypt. The power and control of the local dynasts were centered in walled cities which clustered near the steady water supplies of the piedmont springline and the rich, alluvial soils of the plains. Connecting these concentrations of population with each other and the world beyond were overland routes, also favoured by the relatively level topography. While constituting only a small minority of the population, the ruling elite were able to dominate the other inhabitants of these plains because they alone could field chariots armed with composite bows.

The urban elite maintained its tribute relations over the peasantry primarily by coercive means. No doubt the Canaanite priests functioned as hegemonic agents, using the highly stratified Canaanite pantheon to instill in the peasantry some form of voluntary co-operation with the exploiting class. But we may safely assume that the Canaanite aristocracy relied more heavily on the coercive arm of the military than the hegemonic arm of religion.

This then is the social formation of Canaan at the end of the Bronze Age (see the diagram on the next page). It is out of this society, with its particular articulation of rural-urban relations, that Israel emerged.

The Structure of Canaanite Society:

Late Bronze Age



Three Tier Consumption of Surplus Product

A. Non-productive tertiary consumers
B. Non-productive secondary consumers — Tributary class
C. Productive primary consumers — Peasant productive class

Diagram adapted from Hamlin (1983, xviii)

CHAPTER 7. THE ISRAELITE TRIBES: AGRARIAN PEASANT SOCIETIES

7.1. Israel's revolutionary origins : an anti-urban bias ?

Canaan, on the eve of the emergence of Israel and in the closing years of the Bronze Age, was a territory characterised by a basic internal division and social tension - the conflict of interests between the egalitarian, peasant society of the countryside (often supported by bandit groups) and the tributary, stratified society of the cities. Any new element which emerged in Palestine must necessarily be understood in terms of these social relations in Canaanite society. The Israelite social formation, in its earliest manifestations, was determined by the tributary class struggle between Canaanite peasantry and the tributary class in the cities [18].

The emergence of Israel in Canaan, as we have noted, is a matter of considerable dispute. Three theories dominate this discussion; these will be briefly outlined and then discussed in terms of the model of the rural-urban dialectic, to observe what the model may contribute to the debate about Israel's origins.

1. The immigration theory [advocated by Albrecht Alt (1966), Martin Noth (1960) Manfred Wippert (1971) among others] posits

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18. Israel, as a national entity, did not come into being until the period of the Davidic state. From the time of Deborah onwards, we may speak with confidence about the Israelite confederation of tribes. But prior to this period, the Israelites were still in a state of development. Hence we may use the designation "Israelite" only in the most nascent sense of the term (Thompson:1978b).

a peaceful nomadic or semi-nomadic infiltration of Israelites into Canaan.

2. The conquest theory [as advocated by W.F. Albright (1957), John Bright (1980), Yohanan Aharoni (1976) and others] argues for a decisive military invasion from outside Canaan proper which resulted in the overthrow of numerous Canaanite city-states.

3. The social-revolution theory [as advocated by G. E. Mendenhall (1962), N.K. Gottwald (1979), Marvin Chaney (1983) among others], accounts for Israel's emergence as primarily an uprising from within the land of Canaan by oppressed peasantry and allied groups, overthrowing the oppressive rule of the city-states [19].

The third model has stimulated anew the virulent debate about Israel's origins, a thorough treatment of which is beyond the scope of this thesis [20]. What is necessary here is not an exhaustive examination of the three models, but the investigation of them in terms of the model of the rural-urban dialectic.

The nomadic infiltration theory is the least convincing, for it

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19. One area of research that might strengthen this theory would be a comparative study of peasant revolutions. This would serve to answer the question of why peasants rebel, and whether the peasant rebellion posited by this theory receives analogical support or not.

20. The debate has been particularly stimulated by Gottwald's work. See Hauser (1978), Thompson (1978a), Mendenhall (1983), Halpern (1983) and Erling (1985) for critical treatments of Gottwald's position. Chaney (1983) provides a modified but essentially sympathetic version of Gottwald's model.

operates on the now untenable notion that pastoral nomads were the major change agents in agrarian societies of the ancient Near East (Alt:1966,168). There existed the tendency among scholars of the ancient Near East to view everything rural as nomadic (Mendenhall:1976,133). M.B. Rowton articulates such a view with clarity:

> Close interaction between nomad and sedentary, between tribe and state, represents a feature of Western Asia's history which has not received sufficient attention. This interaction centred on towns in a nomadic environment (Rowton:1973,201. See also De Vaux:1961,3-14).

The relegation of everything non-urban to the status of semi-nomadism and the contention that towns existed in a nomadic environment obscures the essential nature of ancient Near Eastern societies. As we have noted, the basis of ancient Near Eastern societies was the village peasantry. It provided the economic foundations of all the ancient Near Eastern empires, and the environment out of which the urban centers grew. Pastoral nomadism was no more than a minor component in western Asia, and is properly to be understood as a specialisation that emerged from the dominant form of social organisation, the rural peasantry (Gottwald:1983,436-440; Chaney:1983; Banaji:1976).

Both the conquest theory and the social revolution theory postulate an explicitly anti-urban self-consciousness in emergent Israel, for they both construct Israel in violent conflict with the Canaanite strongholds. However, the social revolution theory goes a step further by demonstrating that nascent Israel was not simply anti-urban, but essentially

anti-tributary. What was objectionable to the peasant coalition was the relations of production which allowed a tributary class to exploit their productive labour. This to my mind gives the social revolution model a greater sense of material reality. It provides a material answer to the question of why the Israelites overthrew the Canaanite city-states. The conquest theory fails to provide a substantial reason for the Israelite aggression against the cities, save that which the biblical text provides - that the Israelites were entering into the land God had promised them - which is essentially religious justification rather than material cause. The aetiology of the conflict between Israelites and Canaanites is best explained in terms of the class conflict in Palestine - the attempt by peasantry to overthrow the oppressive tribute exacting class.

Israel developed as the polemical obverse of the Canaanite city-states, with an egalitarian social formation and the belief in the liberator God Yahweh, who was pitted against the tributary oppressor class of the Canaanite cities (Gottwald:1979,555). The earliest Israelites were characterised by the move towards independence of the city-states and their tributary mode of production, establishing egalitarian relations of production of the traditional village peasantry, free from tributary relations of production. As Mendenhall suggests:

> Having become independent, they were determined not immediately to reconstruct the same sort of power-centered, status-centered society as that which they had escaped, even though it was a constant temptation (Abimeleck) to which they finally succumbed (Mendenhall:1976,135).

Given the assumptions of the social-revolution model, Israel's primary definition lay not with its ethnicity, nor with its religion, but with its commitment to an egalitarian society. Gottwald expresses this view when he speaks of Israel's religion as being a reflection of its social formation:

> ... the religion of Yahweh [was] the symbolic bonding dimension of a synthetic egalitarian, intertribal counter society, originating within and breaking off from hierarchic, stratified Canaanite society (Gottwald:1979,692).

The religion of Israel played an important role in enabling the Israelites to free themselves of Canaanite power. The role of Yahwism in this class struggle is best understood in terms of Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony. Gramsci observes that:

> If the ruling class has lost its consensus, i.e. is no longer "leading" but only dominant, exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies and no longer believe what they used to believe previously (Gramsci:1971,275).

In such an event, the class struggle becomes increasingly expressed in violent conflict - the coercive violence of the oppressor and the revolutionary violence of the oppressed. In this class struggle Yahwism functioned as the emergent Israelites' chief hegemonic agent. The Israelites, as a subordinate class in Palestine, waged the class struggle not simply by violent revolution, but by the "creation of a higher synthesis that fuses a complex of social elements in a collective will which [becomes] a political Protagonist on the hegemonic terrain" (Gramsci:1971,326). As a hegemonic force, Yahwism was precisely the agent which further bonded the peasant coalition in a commitment to a particular political

programme. It is probable that the central bonding unit in this process was the covenant, which created a new ideological identity and framework of reference for the revolution. This function of Yahwism was a crucial factor in shrugging off the domination of the Canaanite dynasts, for it broke whatever ideological hold the Canaanite ideologists/priests would have had over the Canaanite peasantry who "converted" to Yahwism via the struggle. The extent to which Canaanite religion was an effective hegemonic agent requires further investigation (Gottwald:1983b,32). As with most ancient Near Eastern ruling classes, we might expect the Canaanite petty princes to have relied rather more heavily on naked coercion than on hegemony.

Whatever the case might be, Yahwism constituted a real and effective hegemonic agent which challenged the dominance of the tributary class and bonded the Israelites together. We find what might be a very early expression of this in the biblical text: this is the song of Deborah in Judges 5, where Deborah sings of "the triumphs of Yahweh, the triumphs of his peasantry in Israel" (Judg 5:11) [21]. The peasants are bonded together by their belief in Yahweh. The constant stress in the biblical accounts of the conflict between Yahwism and the Canaanite religion may in fact be the expression of the class struggle on the ideological or hegemonic terrain.

7.2. The Israelite social formation - a tribal village peasantry

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21. For a discussion on the translation of perazon "peasants" see Gottwald (1979,779-780, n.516) contra Garbini (1978) who argues that it should be translated "iron".

Any attempt to provide a description of the social formation of early Israel faces the problem of the veritable absence of any reliable and clear evidence. Halpern aptly comments that

> From the time of Deborah, at least, ten Israelite tribes constituted some sort of Israel: within a century or so, the twelve tribe empire of the united monarchy will enter full-bloom... But for the period before Deborah, the time of Israel's formation, the evidence is utterly circumstantial - insubstantial (Halpern:1983,47).

This lack of evidence is usually overcome by a judicious and careful use of the literary materials closest to the period at hand, namely the Amarna letters and the Song of Deborah (Judges 5) [22]. In this discussion I shall not rely only on these two sources, but will depend upon the various analogical observations about peasantry and tributary formations I have made earlier in this study.

In order to ascertain the nature of the Israelite social formation properly, we need need to start with the two constituent elements of the mode of production - the forces and relations of production.

The primary forces of production throughout the entire history

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22. After the Amarna letters the Song of Deborah is the most reliable piece of literature available. "The relatively unrevised poetry of the Song of Deborah in Judges 5 takes on added significance in this context, for not only is its claim to predate the monarchy more widely recognized in critical scholarship than that of any other composition in the Hebrew Bible, but its subject is the conflict between Israel and the kings of Canaan" (Chaney:1983,70. See Halpern:1983,8). It is not without significance for this thesis that the two most ancient texts available to us which relate to this period, reflect a constant conflict between the peasantry and the city-state aristocracy. For a discussion of the Song of Deborah see 7.3.2. below.

of biblical Israel have been those of agricultural cultivation (Hopkins:1983,1985; Stager:1976; Mendelsohn:1971 and Turkowski:1969). Israel was, after all that has been said, an agrarian society - a society composed of village peasantry. There is no reason to think that Israel in this period deviated from the pattern of peasant agriculture which was to characterise its later years and which was long established throughout the ancient Near East. We may also safely assume that Israel's particular ecological and political environment and technology shaped the precise manner in which this agrarian society expressed its material life. The forces of production are made up of two elements - the objects of labour and the means of labour.

OBJECTS OF LABOUR

1. the land:
   for cultivation
   for pasturage
2. seeds
3. water

MEANS OF LABOUR

1. ploughs
2. draught animals
3. sickles
4. axes
5. mattocks
6. olive and wine presses
7. silos - cereal storage
8. cisterns - water storage
9. stock animals

The primary crops cultivated were cereals, legumes, dates, olives and vines. Supplementing this foremost means of subsistence was animal husbandry, involving sheep, goats and cattle. Allied to this agricultural activity was transhumant pastoralism, that is, the seasonal grazing patterns of pastoralists. They would spend winter in the lowlands and plains, and spring and summer in the hills and mountains. These transhumant pastoralists were closely tied to the

intensive agricultural activities of sedentary village life. Gottwald stresses this relation of pastoralism to village life:

> The ecological conditions and the economic forms of life were such that agriculture and pastoralism were joined together as symbiotic means of subsistence, either through the same persons practising both or through specialization in one or the other by different parts of the population (Gottwald:1979,464).

Most of the Israelite settlements were small at the beginning, the majority being unfortified villages and a few having fortifications that were puny and makeshift compared to the mighty walls of the Canaanite cities (Mazar:1982; Aharoni:1979,240).

As regards the relations of production Israel exhibited no observable class distinctions. As Gottwald suggests there was a differentiation of labour into agriculturalists and pastoralists, but this does not approximate the division of labour of class societies, for class societies always have a non-productive class (see 2.1. above). In early Israel, then, the immediate producers of the produce were the direct and equal consumers of the produce. There is no evidence of taxation, of a professional or conscriptive army, and no corvee labour. Those who tilled the fields and the vineyards and tended the flocks and herds were the ones who benefited from their own labour. This picture is consistent with the kind of pattern that emerges in peasant societies which are free from tribute extracting classes. There was no doubt that there were peasants who were materially more wealthy and exerted more influence in tribal matters than others. I shall argue below in 7.4. that Abimeleck is an example of one such "wealthy"

peasant, who may not have depended on his own productive labour, but on the labour of others (such as his family, hired peasants and possibly slaves.)

The primary productive unit in peasant Israel was the household, the bet 'ab, which alongside other households constituted the autonomous village (Hopkins:1983,177). In relation to wider social units - clan associations (mispahah), tribes (shevet/'eleph) and confederacy of tribes ('ysrael) - a security that was both internal and external was offered (Gottwald:1979,345-386; Halpern:1983,187-239). The internal security was offered through economic and social cohesion, while external security was made available through the formation of a peasant militia. This was notoriously weak on defence against a surprise attack, while potentially effective on the offensive. The Song of Deborah is a celebration of the victory of such a militia against the professional army of the Canaanite kings. As Max Weber expresses it:

> The peasant proprietor was the main champion of the battle against the urban patrician. He was most exposed to the imposition of forced labour. The Deborah war was conducted essentially as a peasant war. Praised most highly by the Song is the fact that untrained mountain footmen have fought ... and have been victorious (Weber:1952,54-55).

The determinative feature of the Israelite relations of production in this period was the absence of the development of a class which exploited the production of others to ensure its own non-productive existence. It is the struggle to be free from the dominance of an imposed external tributary class that leads to Israel's conflict with the Canaanites and the Philistines. The aetiology of the class conflict in Early Iron

Age Palestine is to be found then in tributary relations which are imposed upon the emergent Israelite tribes by the urban societies. This is a classic expression of the rural-urban dialectic.

Free from these tributary relations, the Israelite tribal social formation approximates the representation in the chart below (adapted from Gottwald:1979,462):

RURAL ISRAEL
an egalitarian peasant social formation

1. village life.
2. minimal division of labour.
3. tendency toward class levelling.
4. kin egalitarian relations of production.
5. diffused and limited self-government.
6. peasant militia and military self-defence.
7. peasant agriculture allied to transhumant pastoralism.
8. barter trade.
9. consumption of social surplus by the immediate producers of social surplus.

We turn now to an examination of two ways in which the Israelites attempted to free themselves from the tributary relations: first, by creating settlements outside the Canaanite sphere of domination and second, by staging military offensives against the Canaanite power bases.

7.3. The Class Struggle in Palestine - Growing Israelite Independence

According to Gramsci (1971) there are two major weapons which a dominant class employs to maintain its postion of supremacy - the coercive weapon and the hegemonic weapon. Correspondingly, there are two ways in which oppressed classes fight for their liberation - on the hegemonic and the coercive terrains. We can expect to observe both these characteristics in the Israelite struggle for liberation from the domination of the Canaanites. We have already observed how Israel waged the class struggle on the hegemonic terrain - Yahwism being the key ideological tool of the revolutionary classes - and we shall later see what form the class struggle on the coercive terrain took when we address the song of Deborah (Judges 5). The emergent Israelites managed to achieve a third way of neutralising the coercive power of the Canaanites and thus terminate the tributary relations which they suffered under. They did this by removing themselves from the Canaanite sphere of domination. The manner in which they did this is the subject of the next section.

7.3.1. The Impact of Iron Technology on the Rural-Urban Dialectic and the Class Struggle in Palestine

Israel emerged in Palestine on the cusp of the Bronze and Iron Ages. This period witnessed a technological revolution which dramatically affected the settlement patterns in Palestine. It determined the particular expression of the rural-urban dialectic by enabling the Israelites to be freed to a

considerable extent from the predatory raids and sustained dominance of the Canaanites. This technological breakthrough was the development of iron technology, which enabled the Israelites to cultivate and settle the previously inhospitable hill country that was inaccessible to the chariotry of the Canaanites, thereby removing themselves from the coercive arm of the Canaanite city-states. (Gottwald:1979,655-660; Muhly:1982; Halpern:1983,98-100; Chaney:1981,8-11). Chaney expresses this succinctly:

> In contrast to the Canaanite power base in walled cities which dominated the fertile plains, premonarchic Israel's poor, mostly unwalled towns and villages were concentrated where the control of the Canaanite kings had never been strong - in the rugged terrain and scrub woods of the hill country. Although this territory was less desirable economically because of its steep, bushy hillsides, thin soils, and relative lack of perennial water sources, it effectively neutralised the tactical advantage of the chariots and composite bows with which the ruling class held sway on the plains(Chaney:1983,41).

The nature of the iron revolution which facilitated these developments requires some attention. Despite the fact that the Bronze Age derives its name from the use of bronze, the metal was a fairly scarce commodity during the Bronze Age. This was due to the infrequent deposits of the two components of bronze - copper and tin (Muhly:1982,43). As a scarce item, bronze was utilised primarily by the ruling classes for the manufacture of weapons, ceremonial objects (including large, ornate statues), ornaments, implements and utensils. Bronze was seldom used by the peasant populations, who had to rely on agricultural implements and weapons made of wood, stone and bone. The village peasantry was thus at an immediate

technological disadvantage in the conflict with the urbanised elite.

The key technological development that introduced the widespread access to iron was the ability to construct furnaces which were able to attain the temperature of 1530 degrees celsius, the melting point of iron - some 400 degrees hotter than the melting point of copper. This was allied to the skills of quenching and tempering. Iron deposits were much more widely spread in the ancient world than either copper or tin. Moreover, iron was more easily extracted from the earth. "Iron ore deposits, even when found in association with copper deposits, tend to be on the surface and therefore their extraction does not require any elaborate mining technology" (Muhly:1982,44). Iron was primarily used for objects of simple shape and design, which needed great hardness and strength. It was most useful for agricultural implements (axes, ploughs and hoes) and weapons (swords, spearheads, knives, and arrowheads).

The new iron technology produced a new, stronger metal which was more widely available than bronze had ever been. The village peasantry, often having direct access to blacksmiths in the larger villages, was now lifted out of the Stone Age and into the Iron Age without really having gone through the Bronze Age.

Chaney (1981,8-11) and Gottwald (1979,655-660) describe the manner in which this new iron technology was employed by emergent Israel. With the new iron implements, the Israelite

peasantry was able to terrace and cultivate the rocky and wooded hillsides previously inaccessible for cultivation. Allied to the development of a lime plaster used for waterproofing, water cisterns could now be dug out of the porous rock with iron implements and then lined with the watertight plaster. This allowed the Israelites far greater flexiblity in establishing their settlements in the rocky hill country away from the major water sources.

These developments had the net effect of a diversification of settlement patterns in Palestine, whereby the empty hill country was increasingly occupied as a more intensive agriculture and improved water storage methods reclaimed the inhospitable areas over a period several decades. The need for the Israelite peasantry to be located around water sources on the fertile plains was considerably reduced, thus freeing them from the Canaanite sphere of domination.

Archaeological excavations of the terraces reveal interesting evidence. L.E. Stager observes:

> These [terraces] were best suited to vine, olive and nut cultivation. But the earliest terrace-farmers at Ai and Kirbeth Raddana grew cereals. This inefficient use of terraces suggests an attempt by the highlanders (probably "Israelites" during the period of the Judges) to maintain a subsistence cereal agriculture free from Canaanite and Philistine spheres, where the primary "bread baskets"were located" (Stager:1976,13).

Gottwald may well be overstating the increase in cultivation which this development brought, but his point is well made when he states that:

> A large-scale increase in wheat and barley cultivation in the highlands will have been of

> critical importance in supplying the food staples that heretofore were cultivable on a large scale only in the feudally dominated estates of the plains. Israel-to-be, fleeing from their onerous role as labourers in the quasi-feudal system, were enabled to form the material base for a separate economy, and an autonomous society only as they found a way to replace the feudally extracted grain surpluses with grain surpluses extracted by free and equal labor (Gottwald:1979,657).

Israel was ultimately not able to sustain this relative independence from tributary societies that this resettlement pattern achieved. Two developments eventually saw them subject to tributary relations once again. The first was that the hill country was not able to meet the needs of the burgeoning Israelite population, which required an ever-expanding agricultural base. The second was the emergence of the Philistines in Palestine and the new mode of warfare they introduced which was independent of chariotry. This opened up the hill country to armed raids, by means of which the Philistines brought the Israelites into subjection. This latter development will be the focus of attention in chapter eight.

7.3.2. The War of Deborah - a Peasant Victory

Judges 5 has been the focus of a great deal of attention in recent scholarship for it is commonly regarded as the text which predates almost any other text in the Hebrew Bible. Boling wryly observes that "a catalogue of full-dress studies of the song of Deborah would read like a Who's Who in biblical research" (Boling:1975,105). This view is not new. In 1895, George Moore stated that "critics have been almost unanimous in attributing the Ode to a contemporary, and a participant in the

glorious struggle which it celebrates... In the opinion of the great majority of scholars, Deborah herself is the author of the Ode" (Moore:1895,129,132). While contemporary scholars are a little more circumspect, essentially the same sentiment is expressed. Halpern expresses the majority consensus:

> The historical value of the Song of Deborah can hardly be exaggerated. It is the oldest extant monument of Hebrew literature, and the only contemporaneous monument of Hebrew history before the foundation of the monarchy (Halpern:1983,133. See also Chaney:1983,70).

This fact alone should recommend Judges 5 to our study, for it stands out in the otherwise blank expanse of the pre-monarchic period.

Yet another factor makes it all the more important. The song of Deborah is a paean of praise for the victory the Israelite peasantry won against the Canaanite kings. According to the text the battle was was fought near Taanach and Meggido (5:19), on the southern side of the plain. A coalition of Canaanite kings of the adjacent city-states under the leadership of Sisera (5:19-20) for obvious tactical reasons arraigned their chariotry and highly armed soldiers on an open field. The Israelites were able to raise 40,000 peasant soldiers (5:8), armed with nothing but the most rudimentary weapons (5:8), from five of the Israelite tribes [23]. The Canaanites were routed in the battle, largely due to the river Kishon coming down in what was most probably a flash flood

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23. According to the text these were Ephraim (5:14), Benjamin (5:14), Machir (5:14), Zebulun (5:14), Issachar (5:15 & 18) and Naphtali (5:18). The tribes that did not join the Israelite forces were Reuben, Gilead, Dan, and Asher (5:15-17).

(5:21). The victory is seen as belonging to Yahweh and his peasants [24].

5:11 To the sound of musicians at the
watering places
there they repeat the triumphs
of Yahweh,
the triumphs of his peasantry in
Israel.
5:31 So perish all thine enemies
O Yahweh !
But thy friends be like the sun as
he rises in his might.

The victory is a decisive act by Yahweh and his heavenly bodies (5:21). Praise is due to Yahweh for this victory (5:3-5), whose people call themselves "Israel" (5:2).

What then can we make of the significance of this song ? As Albrecht Alt (1966,179) correctly observes, the song of Deborah records that an unusually large group of Israelite tribes quite clearly took part in the battle. John Bright makes much of this when he states that "it is clear from the Song of Deborah (Judg., ch.5) that the tribal league was in full operation, with at least ten members, in the twelfth century" (Bright:1980,167). This view is tempered by the warning of Siegfried Hermann who correctly asserts that,

> the document should not be over-estimated or seen in the context of a 'system' of tribes. The six tribes around the plain of Megglido clearly take part; all the other tribes are on the periphery, and were probably not considered for the army. There is no mention at all of...Judah and Simeon... Nevertheless, the Song of Deborah does represent one stage and

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24. For the translation of perazon "peasantry" see Gottwald (1979,779-780 n.516) contra Garbini (1978) who reads "iron" and Boling (1975,109) who reads "warriors". Gottwald's translation is to be preffered as it makes more sense of the context.

> gives an occasion which will have been of far-reaching significance for the cohesion of the leading Israelite tribes and their common action (Hermann:1981,118-119. See Halpern:1983,8,47).

No doubt, from the time of Deborah (c. 1125 B.C.E.) there existed some form of bonding that went beyond each tribe (shevet), to embrace an increasing number of tribes in some form of social cohesion [25]. It also appears that the victory which Deborah and Barak achieved over the Sisera coalition is to be associated with the gradual decline of the Canaanite domination of the Israelite tribes. This military victory, by the ill-equipped peasant militia, over the chariot-warriors of the Canaanites might well have served to limit the coercive power of the Canaanites, and allow the Israelites from the hill country to gradually settle the fertile plains. Aharoni describes the time after the wars of Deborah as "a relatively peaceful period of intensive settlement and until the expansion of the Philistines no serious rival endangered the growing Israelite population" (Aharoni:1979,267).

The exact historical events that lie behind the song of Deborah are possibly beyond our grasp. This text cannot be expected to provide later readers with direct access to the events. Coote and Whitelam have some important words in this regard: "The continued attempts to reconstruct the history of Israel from the starting point of a minute literary study of the Bible show little sign of real progress" (Coote & Whitelam:1986,111). I

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25. Martin Noth's celebrated analogy of this tribal confederation with the Greek amphictyony has now been laid to rest. See Chambers (1983); Halpern (1983,4); Coote & Whitelam (1986,112); Mayes (1977,299-307).

would contend that the value of Judges 5, the song of Deborah, lies not in its providing access to the "real" history, but in the very fact that it is itself an ideological agent in the class struggle. It is quite possible that this text was used as an ideological/hegemonic tool by emergent Israel to further challenge not only the coercive arm of the Canaanite kings, but also their hegemonic control of the peasantry. As such we might do well to regard the song of Deborah as a manifesto of liberated Israel, proclaiming the victory of Yahweh and his peasantry in the class struggle with the urban tributary classes.

The rural-urban articulation in Palestine during the period of the emergence of the Israelite tribal confederation seems to have followed the pattern that we have been led to expect in tributary societies. This struggle is reflected on an ideological level in the biblical text (Judges 5), where the enemy is identified as the Canaanite kings and the victors are the peasants. Norman Gottwald, after an exhaustive study of early poetry and related texts, in which the Canaanites are viewed as the "enemy" (Gottwald:1979,503-554) concludes that in "text after text the enemy is equatable with the Canaanite rulers and their military-political functionaries rather than with the Canaanite populace as a whole" (Gottwald:1979,555).

This is an important observation, for it adds weight to my contention that the primary significance of the song of Deborah is that it is a hegemonic moment in the class struggle, rather

than an accurate historical account of what took place. It may well give us access to what took place, but its account of the battle must be understood as an ideological appropriation of the events. This song, a specimen of the earliest Hebrew poetry, is a victory ode, combining various elements - a Psalm-style description of a theophany of Yahweh and summons to praise Yahweh (5:2-11,31) [26], the judgemental record of the tribes which took part (5:14-18), a highly stylised account of the battle (5:19-23), the blessing of Jael (5:24-27), and finally a taunt song mocking Sisera's mother and the women waiting in the city for the return of the fallen army (5:28-30) It appears that to enforce the irony of the victory of peasantry over the army, the closing stanzas of the song focus on the women of the tributary class [27]. Their champion has been killed by a tent-dwelling woman, and they are mocked in the light of their impending grief.

Clearly the text is intended to denigrate the tributary classes, men and women, and their military apparatus, while exalting Yahweh and the peasants in their victory over the oppressors. The ideological intention of the text may well be to undermine the control the Canaanites kings enjoyed, simply by virtue of the awe which their military might induced. The chariots and warriors of the Canaanites are routed by the

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26. Mowickel suggests that this is the later part of the song, whose cultic setting is the festival of covenant renewal (Boling:1975,116).

27. A more direct treatment of women of the tributary class is to be found in Amos 4:1-3. Women play a particularly important role in this song, a matter which requires further investigation.

peasants and the Canaanite leader is killed by a woman! The power of the Canaanites can be, and has been, broken. It is in this sense that the song of Deborah is a contender on the *hegemonic* terrain, a moment in the ideological struggle for the allegiance of the Canaanite peasantry.

The Israelite tribes not only faced the problem of an external urban tributary class, but had to contend with the development of such a class within their own tribal ranks. We turn now to examine one such situation; the incident at Shechem with Abimeleck.

7.4. Abimeleck - Israelite Resistance to Internal Urbanisation

As already noted, the potential for stratification is always present in egalitarian peasant societies, and might be induced by a variety of internal and external phenomena. Judges 9 narrates a story which gives an example of how one such occasion arose in tribal Israel. The text indicates that the events took place around the city-state of Shechem which was under the control of a Canaanite aristocracy.

In the Amarna letters we learn about Shechem, called Sa-akmi in the texts (EA. 249-255). From them we learn that the territory controlled by Lab'ayu, the king of Shechem, was especially large in contrast to the other smaller Canaanite principalities in the southern region of the Egyptian province. Aharoni suggests that "...this is not simply a royal Canaanite city but rather an extensive kingdom with Shechem as its capital" (Aharoni:1979,175). It is quite possible that Shechem maintained its prominent position into the late twelfth century

and beyond, although Aharoni (1979,264) suggests that the Abimeleck incident represents an attempt by the aristocracy of Shechem to regain the power they once held in the Amarna period. Certainly, Shechem occupied a prominent position in Palestinian history, notably as the capital of Israel, once it had been rebuilt after its destruction in the late twelfth century [28], which some associate with the Abimeleck incident (Mayes:1977,317).

Gideon (Judges 6-8) was the only one of the "judges", the military, quasi-juridical/political leaders [29], to be succeeded by his son. Abimeleck succeeded his father as judge and gained control of Shechem in an attempt to establish a tributary society within the orbit of Israelite tribalism (Halpern:1978). That Abimeleck could capitalise on his father's position is an indication of the power which could accumulate in a particular family/clan in a peasant society.

The text of Judges 9 does not cast much light on the exact nature of Abimeleck's intentions. A story of fratricide, revenge, betrayal, success and final defeat is recounted by the text, without a revelation of what exactly Abimeleck intended

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28. For a discussion of the dating of the incident at Shechem and the archaeological evidence see Campbell (1983).

29. For a discussion of the role of these judges see Gottwald (1979:689-691) who suggests that they fit "comfortably within intertribal leadership of 'the big man' type, i.e., the person who has a limited ad hoc function delimitated by existing forms of traditional leadership" (Gottwald:1979,690). This view is to be preferred to Weber's "charismatic figure" type, so popular in current scholarship (see Malamat:1971,130), because it lays the stress on the role of the community in sanctioning and limiting the activity of the individual, rather than on the individual judge as the primary, and almost sole actor.

to do. A number of suggestions are made. Aharoni (1979,264) suggests that in spite of Abimeleck being crowned king by the aid of the inhabitants of Shechem, he considered himself to be an Israelite king. Mayes argues that this was not the case:

> Although claimed to be part of Israelite tradition, it is probable that this should be seen as an episode in the Canaanite history of the city...the style of Abimeleck's kingship is certainly Canaanite, bearing a close resemblance to the pattern of Labaya's rule over Shechem in the Amarna period. It was a city-state form of kingship quite unrelated to the form of the Israelite monarchy as it eventually emerged under Saul. This was not so much an abortive attempt at kingship within Israel as the final act in the Canaanite royal history of Shechem (Mayes:1977,316).

Mayes' argument that Abimeleck's kingship was essentially external to Israel is intriguing, but has a number of difficulties which must be pointed out. The first is that the tradition comes to us through Israelite literature, clearly part of the sagas of the "judges". The text understands the proceedings as Israelite proceedings. Abimeleck is identified as one who ruled over Israel (9:22). Secondly, Mayes' contention that Abimeleck's kingship was not similar to Saul's kingship and therefore could not be authentically Israelite does not stand scrutiny, particularly as David's kingship did not resemble Saul's; in fact, David's resembled the Canaanite model, most notably in his capture of Jerusalem to serve as his base. Notwithstanding, Mayes argues anachronistically. One simply cannot exclude the possibility of a particular manifestation of a kingship by saying that it did not resemble what was to come at a later period. Further, the Israelites borrowed extensively from the Canaanites, particularly, given the social revolution model, because many of them were

"converted" Canaanites themselves. It is likely that Abimeleck was familiar only with the Canaanite model of a monarchy, so its was the logical model for him to implement within his tribal society. Mayes' argument is simply not convincing.

I think we must concede that Abimeleck was more likely to have been working within the rather diffused structure of the Israelite tribal confederation. His position of privilege, as the son of a former judge, might well have been a temptation to extend his power and authority. (Notice how Solomon introduces qualitative changes to the monarchy of his father which reflected his social location as an urban prince, whereas his father had been a peasant guerilla leader with strong tribal loyalties.) Mayes's motivation for attempting to make this issue external to Israel is not clear. I believe that we have to locate it squarely within Israelite tradition. Similar an events cannot be uncommon in peasant societies.

In conclusion then, the failure of Abimeleck to establish a stratified, tributary society with its base at Shechem is a cogent example of the ability of such an egalitarian society to resist the rise of class differentiation within its ranks (Campbell:1983; Halpern:1983,217-220; Boling:1975,165-185). Gideon and Abimeleck's policies were directed at welding Israel into a nation-state under a king, centered on the old city-state of Shechem, which had long been seen as worth amalgamating into the tribal confederation of Israel (Boling:1975,184). Only much later was David able to put into practice successfully Abimeleck's model of converting a Canaanite stronghold into the center of rule for a new state.

8. THE PHILISTINES - AN URBAN TRIBUTARY SOCIETY

8.1. Philistine Origins

The emergence of the Philistines in Palestine in the middle of the twelfth century has not yet been conclusively explained, but the cumulative evidence, as Barnett (1975,esp 371-378) and Albright (1975b) demonstrate, indicates that the Philistines came from the Aegean [1]. The Philistines appear to have been one constituent part of the mass migration of people which followed the destruction of the Anatolian and Aegean civilisations at the end of the Bronze Age (Malmat:1975; Mazar:1971,164-168). The Sea Peoples moved out of the Aegean and migrated by land and sea to the Near East, where they were able to force a foothold as settlers, and were eventually integrated into the local populations. The Philistines are first mentioned by name (prst) in the annals of Rameses III (c. 1185 B.C.E.), in the description of his campaign against an invasion of Libyans and the Sea Peoples. The prst are listed among other groupings within the Sea Peoples.

8.2. The Philistines in Palestine.

Repulsed by the Egyptians under Rameses III, the Sea Peoples sought less well defended territories in which they might settle. The Philistines, for reasons which are not clear to us, chose the southwestern coastal strip of Palestine running

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1. It is possible that the Philistines may be equated with the Pelasgoi, the pre-Greek inhabitants of the Aegean (Barnett:1975,372; Kitchen:1973,54-60).

from Carmel south to the Negeb and extending from the coast to the Judean foothills. Gottwald (1979,410) is among those who have suggested that the Philistines were permitted to enter the region as vassals of the Egyptians to serve as garrison troops, bolstering the waning Egyptian control of the region. Aharoni (1979,268) argues against such an assumption, and suggests that the Philistines entered Canaan no earlier than the middle of the twelfth century, some 40 years after the battles with Rameses III. He proposes that instead of coming into Palestine as Egyptian proteges, the Philistines may have spent some time elsewhere (he suggests Crete) prior to a military invasion of Palestine which placed control of the southern coastal strip in their hands.

Whatever the case may be, by c. 1150 B.C.E. the Philistines were firmly entrenched in Palestine, presumably having subdued the local Canaanite population. Their power base centered on five cities: Askelon, Ashdod and Gaza - the ancient coastal cities on the Via Maris - and Ekron and Gath - further east in the Shephelah. We do not know how the first three cities, all ancient Canaanite centers, came under Philistine control. The latter two were most probably established by the Philistines themselves to control the approaches to the Judean hill country (Kitchen:1973,59). The actual construction of these cities required a significant concentration of surplus product in the particular locations, which in turn required relations of production which were capable of producing, concentrating and maintaining such a surplus product. Aharoni (1979,273) notes that Tell Qasileh, a harbour town at the mouth of the Yarkon,

was founded by the Philistines. Aphek, a settlement at the source of the Yarkon, probably functioned as the northern border-town from which the Philistines launched many military campaigns (Aharoni & Avi-Yonah:1977,58). Most of the Canaanite cities in Philistia can be expected to have continued to exist under Philistine control.

Philistine authority was seemingly vested in the oligarchy of five "lords" (entitled seren) in their five principal cities. A crucial element of the Philistine social formation was the close cohesion of these five cities under the five seren, in some form of federal co-operation, with a resultant demographic, economic and military power build-up. This concentration of power in the Philistine coalition not only enabled the Philistines to become the dominant regional power, but it also required an increasing surplus extraction to support the burgeoning growth of the Philistine cities. Because the Philistines established themselves decisively as an urban society, we can expect that at some stage in their development they embarked on wars of conquest - in order to compensate for the losses sustained in the class struggle internal to Philistia - by extracting tribute from without. This, as we have observed (3.3.), is what Amin (1980,55) calls "... the motivation behind all tributary wars."

8.3. The Philistine Domination of the Israelite Tribes

The Philistine wars of conquest did not begin immediately upon their establishment in Palestine [2]. The clashes between the Philistines and the Israelite tribes did not begin until the very earliest years of the eleventh century, over 50 years after the Philistines had established themselves Palestine [3]. This conflict began at first with what appeared to be border disputes, with the Philistines moving gradually eastwards. The figure of Samson looms large in the Deuteronomistic accounts of these conflicts. Some time later the struggle came to a head in a sustained battle in which the Philistines, launching their attack from Apek, won a decisive victory over the Israelite tribes (1 Sam 4). The shrine of Shi!oh was presumably destroyed, the Ark captured and the peasant militia of the Israelite tribes put to rout. This battle appears to have been instrumental in enforcing Israelite submission to Philistine tribute extraction which was maintained by the establishment of several Philistine garrisons in Israelite territory (1 Sam 5:10 & 13:3). H.W. Hertzberg (1964,45-51) stresses the immobilising effect of this defeat on the Israelites, for the Philistines penetrated into the hill country of Ephraim, a secure and central element of their defence system. The loss of the Ark,

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2. Whether the Philistine wars are accurately described as "wars of conquest" might be debated. I use the phrase in the sense of attaining new territory over which tributary relations could be enforced, rather than the more politically explicit creation of colonised territories.

3. Kitchen (1973,63) convincingly argues for a very early eleventh century date, while Aharoni (1979,274) prefers c. 1050. Boling (1975,224) dates Samson's conflict with the Philistines anywhere between 1160 and 1100.

that ideologically potent cultic symbol, must have further undermined Israelite morale. The role of the Ark in tribal and monarchic Israel is central to the development of an ideological basis for both tribal and monarchic Israel (Gottwald:1979,370; Ahlstrom:1984; Bentzen:1948; Cross:1973,100-111 & 238-243). By the time of Saul, the Philistine dominance of Israel was secure, and Israelite attempts to shrug off the extraction of their surplus product had become endemic.

Scholars, working with the traditional model of rural urban relations are able to give the correct analytical reason for the battles of aggression against the Philistines which were initiated by the Israelites. A.D.H. Mayes gives succinct expression to the general consensus when he asserts that "the battles in which Israelite tribes engaged [were] in order to alleviate oppression from an outside group" (Mayes:1974,79). This perception is clearly consistent with our model of the rural-urban dialectic.

The weakness of traditional scholarship emerges with its explanantion of the aetiology of the Philistine aggression. As I have observed in the discussion above, the cause for the conflict generated by the Philistines lies in their need to expand enforced tributary relations to other areas in order to ensure a sufficient flow of surplus to their cities. It is this step which most scholars appear to be unable to take for I have found no coherent and convincing explanation of the motive forces which lay behind the Philistine wars of aggression given by scholars

working with the traditional model of rural-urban relations [4]. This is, I believe, the result of the inadequacy of the traditional model to provide explanations for sustained class conflict within society.

Aharoni, for example, sees the reason for the Philistine aggression as lying in the threat which Israel posed to Philistia as the Israelite tribes developed a greater cohesion and a correspondingly greater military potential. He maintains that:

> Philistine expansion evidently began precisely at the time when the Israelites were becoming firmly established and asserting their independence. It was probably then that the Philistines began to feel the presence of a serious opponent who posed a threat to their security. Thus they tried to smash this new force while it was still in a formative stage (Aharoni:1979,274).

Kitchen merely suggests that the conflict arose between "two gradually expanding communities" (Kitchen:1973,63), presumably assuming that demographic growth was the underlying motor force of the conflict.

Albrecht Alt, writing in the 1950s, comes the closest to providing a convincing explanation. He believed that the weakness inherent in the Israelite social formation:

> ... could only have constituted a temptation for the Philistines to assert in the Israelite domain, i.e. in the mountainous hinterland, that superiority which the possession of the country's lowlands had placed in their hands. This would not have been done in order to extend their possessions - their possessions in the lands were ostensibly quite sufficient for them - but rather with the intention of establishing their overlordship along the lines of the former

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4. In contrast see Gottwald (1979,414-425).

> dynasty of the pharaohs, and with the practical aim of exploiting the husbandry and agriculture of the mountainous regions by exacting tribute. They would be the ruling military class; the Israelites and Canaanites would be their subjects and produce the food - this is how the Philistines would have liked to see the distribution of functions throughout Palestine (Alt:1966,180-181).

Alt's analysis is perceptive, but it suffers from a lack of theoretical rigour. If the Philistine territorial possessions were sufficient for their needs, as he asserts, why then did they have to exploit the produce of the Canaanites and Israelites [5]? Neither was the conflict between the Israelites and the Philistines engendered simply because "this is how the Philistines would have liked to see the distribution of function." No whim of fancy sustains such a costly and long class struggle. What is far more convincing, and consistent with our observations of other tributary relations, is that the Philistines had to achieve such a distribution of function precisely because their tributary mode of production demanded an ever increasing centripetal flow of surplus to sustain their urban society. This generated a classic example of the class struggle in a tributary formation. Imposed upon the rural Israelite peasantry was an extractive structure which coerced it to pay rent or tribute to maintain its possession of the land. The Philistines required such conditions to be able to generate sufficient surplus to maintain a non-productive urban elite, with all the trappings of urban life - a priestly group, an aristocracy, a professional army, specialist artisans,

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5. The Canaanites here are presumably not the urban elite of the city-states, but the "native" Canaanite peasants who preceeded and outlived the Indo-Aryan ruling class of the city-states.

administrators and slaves.

Two elements can be identified within Philistine society which enabled them to gain military ascendency over the Israelite tribes. The first is the concentration of co-operative power in the federation of the five cities. Palestine had a history of temporary coalitions among the princes of the city-states, none of which had any enduring effect on Canaanite society. With the emergence of the Philistines a new form of political organisation was introduced: a federal relation of cities, which gave the Philistines a power base previously unknown in Palestine.

The second factor was the new and superior form of military technology introduced to Palestine by the Philistines. As we have observed, Canaanite military power was based on chariotry - that incomparable military instrument of the Bronze Age. Its chief weakness was that it required particular terrain in order to function efficiently. Chariotry was simply of no use in the mountainous hill country which the Israelites had populated. The Canaanites could not hold the Israelites coercively, just as they had lost hegemonic control over them with the emergence of Yahwistic religion.

In contrast the Philistines developed highly mobile units of archers and infantry which were independent of chariotry. This laid the Palestinian hill country populated primarily by Israelite peasantry open to Philistine incursions. Allied to the improved weaponry of the early Iron Age, this deployment of forces gave the Philistines a decisive military edge, and

enabled them to dominate the tribal Israelites [6]. This domination appears to have been primarily coercive. I am not aware of any evidence which might suggest that the Philistines were interested in gaining hegemonic control of the Israelites.

From the biblical narratives we are able to observe how the Philistine domination of the Israelites evolved over time. It began as a peaceful co-existence, then developed to the stage of border skirmishes at the time of Samson (Judges 14-16) [7]. These took place largely on the border stretching between Gezer and Lachish (Aharoni & Avi-Yonah:1977,56). The border disputes grew in scale until the Philistines had subdued western Judah by ca.1100 B.C.E. Some half a century later, the Philistines mounted a crucial offensive from Aphek, resulting in a complete victory for the Philistines (1 Samuel 4-6) in north and central Ephraim, leaving the Israelite tribal confederation at the mercy of the Philistines. With the capture of the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh (1 Samuel 6:1), the chief cultic/ideological bonding mechanism of the Israelite confederation was in the hands of the Philistine tributary class.

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6. See Gottwald (1979,760-761) for extensive bibliography on Philistine military power. 1 Sam 17:4-7 provides detailed description of the armour and weapons of Goliath, the Philistine champion.

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7. Mayes observes that Samson's conflict with the Philistines "is simply of the nature of border disputes. Samson led no army against the Philistines and the only tribe besides that of Dan which appears in the story, and that in a very minor way, is Judah" (Mayes:1974,78).

The Philistine control over the Israelites increased to the point where they were able to deny the Israelites access to their own iron technology, ensuring Israelite dependence on them for smithying (which brought in its own revenue) (1 Samuel 13:19-22) [8]. Muhly astutely observes that "the Philistine ironworking monopoly was political, not technological. The Philistines were not witholding technological/industrial secrets which allowed them exclusive access to iron - rather it was their political motivation which determined this action" (Muhly:1982,54). The Philistines were able to determine the relations of production, while at the same time denying the Israelites access to iron weaponry, thereby blunting their military ability to resist the Philistine oppression. The Israelites were forced to continue the cultivation of the hill country with iron implements in order to meet the tributary demands while their military innocuity was ensured.

The conflict between the Israelites and the Philistines reached a peak in the closing decades of the eleventh century, under the Saulide and Davidic kingships, with David finally breaking the Philistine domination thus terminating the tributary relations over the Israelite peasantry (De Vries:1978; Aharoni & Avi-Yonah:1977,66-67). Ironically, the very forces which broke the imposition of external tributary relations on the

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8. The extraction of cash money from rural peasantry is a most grievious oppression, a tactic employed for example, in South Africa to force the peasantry off their land holdings and into the labour market on the white farms and the mines, by means of the imposition of a hut tax and poll tax on the peasants (Bundy:1979).

Israelites (the professional military force operating from the stronghold of a walled city under an increasingly centralised bureaucracy) developed internal tributary relations, whereby the Israelite peasants were forced once more into tributary relations of production by an urban Israelite elite - relations of production they were to endure for centuries.

PART III

CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER 9. THE RURAL-URBAN DIALECTIC IN EARLY IRON AGE PALESTINE

In embarking on this project, I set out to address two matters: first, the development of a model of rural-urban relations in tributary societies; second, the application of this model to Palestine c. 1200-1020 B.C.E. with the specific intention of determining the aetiology of the antagonistic relations which existed between Israel and the Canaanites and Philistines. This thesis, therefore, has combined both theory construction and historical analysis in the attempt to contribute to the development of a historical materialist reading of Israelite history and the Hebrew Bible. What then is the contribution it has made ?

On the theoretical level, this thesis has developed and introduced to the field of biblical studies an analytical model of rural-urban relations, which is so constructed as to bring into sharp focus the causal forces of the class struggle in tributary societies, with particular attention to the societies of the ancient Near East. The special merit of this model, as a constitutive element of a general class analysis, is that it identifies the provenance of the two major classes in most tributary societies [1], as well as specifying with precision the reasons why urban societies were in sustained conflict with

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1. I do observe that this model does not strictly apply to all tributary societies, the exception being feudal Europe (p.52).

rural societies.

The aetiology of this conflict lies both in the very constitution of the physical construction of the city, and in the relation of the urban ruling class to the productive activity of the society. Firstly, the urban place, as a physical entity, requires the concentration of a vast amount of surplus product in its construction, as well as requiring the essentially unproductive labour of those who construct it. Secondly, the dominant class in the cities was a non-productive class, for its members did not produce the means to satisfy the requirements of their material life. This necessitated the appropriation of the productive labour of others by this class in order that it might be perpetuated.

The city is then both the concentration point of accumulated surplus product and unproductive labour, and the provenance of a non-productive class. This means, that for a city to exist, it must be parasitic on the productive class of society. In the ancient Near East, as in most tributary societies, the village peasantry was the primary productive unit, producing what was necessary to sustain life. This produce had to be channelled to the cities. To ensure this life-blood flow of produce, the ruling class imposed tributary relations upon the productive class, using force to coerce it to part with the fruits of its labour. Here lies the aetiology of class conflict in the ancient Near East - that tributary relations of production were enforced upon the productive peasant classes by the non-productive urban class.

In the analytical part of this thesis, I demonstrate, by using this model, that the source of the conflict between the Israelite peasants and the Canaanite and Philistine urban dwellers lay precisely in such tributary relations of production.

The Canaanite tributary class extracted tribute from the peasantry of its rural hinterlands. Out of this oppressed peasantry the Israelites emerged - an amalgam of debilitated social groupings commited to stemming the sapping flow of the fruits of their productive activity to the cities. They sought to achieve this by breaking the coercive hold which the Canaanite aristocracy kept over them, both on the battle field and by removing themselves from the sphere of Canaanite power. In Yahwistic religion the Israelites found a powerful hegemonic tool to counter their ideological bondage to the hierarchical Canaanite religious system which was fashioned to elicit their consent to the extortion of their labour. The antagonism between these two societies was undoutably expressed in ethnic and religious terms (most clearly in the biblical text), but these were not the source of conflict, but rather the ideological expression thereof. Yahwism can in fact be understood as deriving its essential character from this class conflict, which generated the sustained antagonism between Yahwism and Canaanite religion.

As the Israelite tribal formation developed, so the intensity of the class struggle grew, with the Israelites increasingly able to neutralise the domination of the Canaanite cities. This development contributed to the gradual decline of the

Canaanite tributary class, to the point to which they became allies with the Israelites in the mid-eleventh century in the face of the Philistine power build-up on the southern coastal strip. This alliance endured as long as there was a convergence of class interests between the former antagonists.

The Philistine tributary class, which had its power base in a coalition of five cities, used its superior weaponry and an innovative deployment of troops to overcome the defences of the Israelites and to penetrate the hill country which the Israelites populated. Once again the Israelites were subjected to tributary relations with an urban society - their productive activity being appropriated by the Philistines in order to maintain their urban existence.

The rise of Philistine power in Palestine may well have kept the Israelites in a state of almost servile labour for an extended period of time, had the conditions not arisen which enabled the Israelites to shrug off the hold of the Philistines and put them on the defensive. What these precise conditions were, and how Israel responded to them, is not the subject of this thesis, save to observe the central irony of this development. Seeking to free themselves from tributary relations, the Israelites developed an urban tributary class which was then able to terminate the tributary relations with the Philistines - a development which was accompanied by the imposition of tributary relations on the Israelite peasants by the Israelite urban class. The conflict between urban tributary societies and rural egalitarian societies became a conflict internal to the Israelite social formation throughout

the monarchic period.

In conclusion then, the model of the rural-urban dialectic demonstrates that the aetiology of the conflict between the rural Israelites and the urban Canaanites and Philistines lies with the particular relations of production imposed upon the Israelites by the two tributary societies.

CHAPTER 10. THE RURAL-URBAN DIALECTIC AND BIBLICAL STUDIES

Finally, a few observations about the value of the model of the rural-urban dialectic for the discipline of biblical studies are required.

Firstly, the model of the rural-urban dialectic has emerged as a useful analytical tool for studying the aetiology and nature of conflict in ancient Israel. Although I have only applied the model to the pre-monarchic period, the potential for its use in the study of other periods of Israelite history is self-evident. The nature of class conflict within monarchical Israel requires urgent attention, which is true of the post-exilic period as well. One of the strengths of this model is that it is able to define the exact nature of relations in colonial situations - so the Hellenistic and Roman colonial policies vis-a-vis Galilee, Samaria and Judea would be usefully illustrated by such an investigation. In short this model can be applied with benefit to almost any period of Palestinian history, with its particular strength lying in its ability to locate the provenance and describe the nature of conflict in a given tributary society.

Secondly, the paradigm out of which the model is developed, the historical materialist paradigm, has its own set of implications for biblical studies.

Biblical studies, as a both a formal and informal discipline, has undoubtably benefitted from the introduction of social science methodologies to its array of critical tools. The evaluation of this development, and its precise implications for the discipline, are not so clear. There are those who proceed with a "business as usual" attitude, who note the emergence of these new tools but do not incorporate them into their research. Others spent much time and energy learning sociological skills in order to make business function a little better than usual but proceed with essentially the same goals and methodologies as before.

There is however, another approach; an approach which, because it adopts the particular social scientific paradigm of historical materialism, does not allow business to go on as usual. Its proponents state, as we observed in the introduction, that the historical critical methodology - the broad framework of contemporary biblical studies - needs to be overhauled itself, for it is the product of people who have shared a particular historical and social location which has determined their perception of reality. As a result, the historical critical methodology inevitably displays something of the particular class commitment of its exponents. This criticism is not confined to materialist sociology alone, but is shared by such people who have traditionally been excluded from contributing meaningfully to the realm of biblical

scholarship out of their concrete historical experience. To catalog but a few - women, blacks, gays and working class people.

The point is not that the tools of the historical critical method are invalid. To the contrary. It is rather the need for people who have different class and social commitments from those who have historically determined the course of biblical studies, to read the biblical text, and impact biblical scholarship by developing tools which are born out of their concrete experience of life and their class commitment.

In conclusion, this work, which has developed and introduced the model of the rural-urban dialectic to the discipline, seeks to impact biblical studies in just such a manner.

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